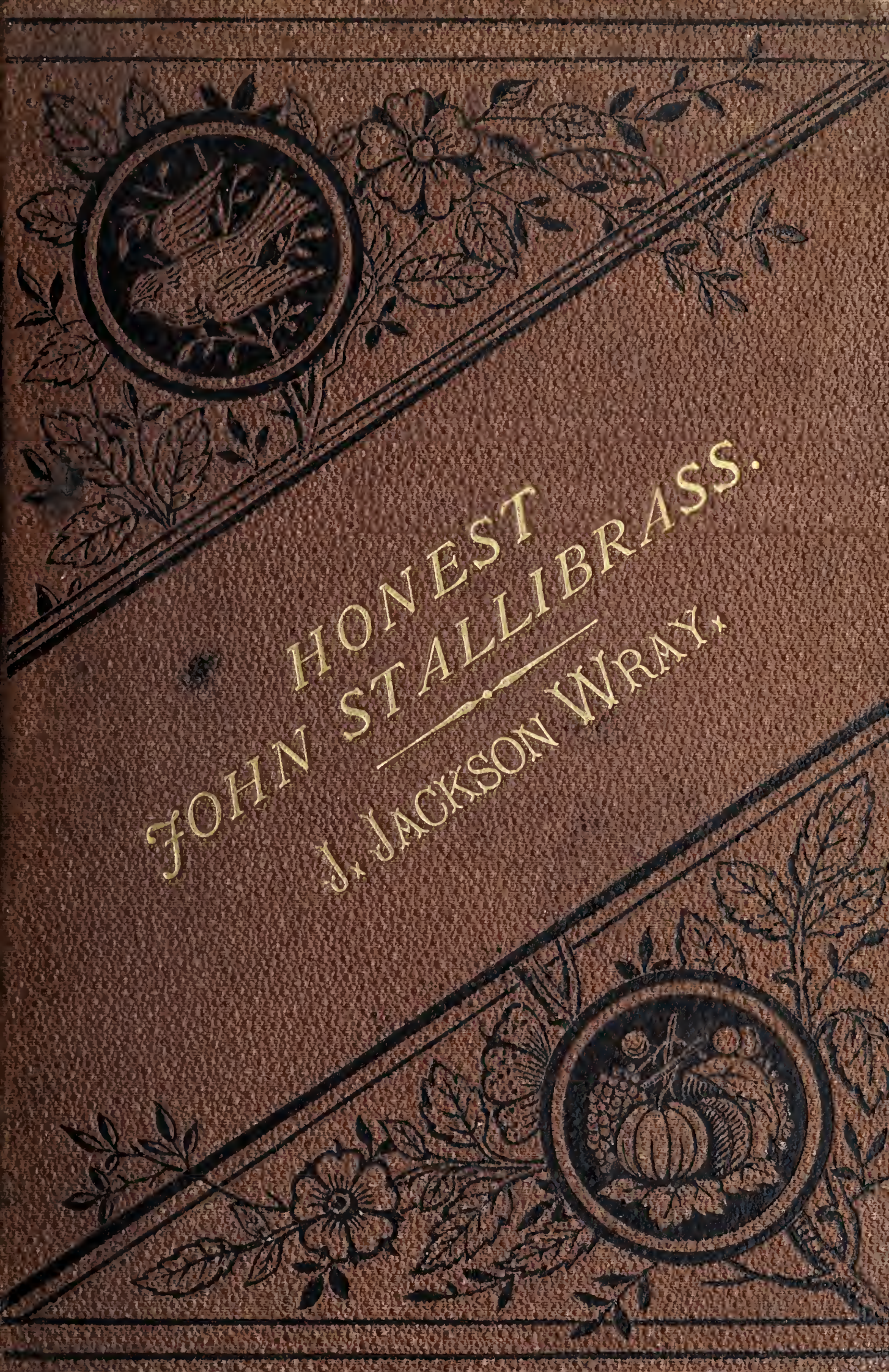

HONEST
JOHN STALLIBRASS.
J. JACKSON WRAY.

Mrs E G Parsons

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
University of Toronto

https://archive.org/details/honestjohnstalli00wray

HONEST JOHN STALLIBRASS.



"The stumpy sound of Ziah's wooden leg . . . was greeted by a juvenile and jubilant sound of welcome."—*Page* 21.

HONEST

JOHN STALLIBRASS.

BY

J. JACKSON WRAY,

AUTHOR OF

"NESTLETON MAGNA," "MATTHEW MELLOWDEW," "A NOBLE VINE,"
"PAUL MEGGITT'S DELUSION," "CHRONICLES OF CAPSTAN CABIN,"
"A MAN EVERY INCH OF HIM," "PETER PENGELLY," ETC.

TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 KING ST. EAST.
C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE. S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

1885.

ENTEPED, according to the Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, by WILLIAM BRIGGS, in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture, at Ottawa.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Gives the Reader a peep at Craigmuir, a glimpse of the Neb, and a glance at the Ridge 1

CHAPTER II.

Makes the Reader acquainted with Ziah Quayle, "a Fine Old Salt" 7

CHAPTER III.

Tells how the Neb had donned its Nightcap, and what that Portended 12

CHAPTER IV.

How Margaret Stallibrass came to reside in the Cottage by the Neb 17

CHAPTER V.

Widow Stallibrass is out in the Storm, and meets with a Strange Experience 23

CHAPTER VI.

Tells of Ziah Quayle's Important Mission to the Fisherman's Arms 29

CHAPTER VII.

How Little Trixie made a wise Suggestion, and what came of it . 36

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE
Relates what Mrs. Stallibrass saw in the Storm upon Craigmuir Ridge 42

CHAPTER IX.

Ziah Quayle delivers his sentiments on Storms in general, and One in particular 48

CHAPTER X.

The Widow begins her Story—How John Stallibrass became Captain of the *Deucalion* 55

CHAPTER XI.

The Widow's Story continued—John Stallibrass shows his Mettle 61

CHAPTER XII.

The Widow's Story continued—How Duncan M'Leod was threatened with Disaster 66

CHAPTER XIII.

The Wreck on the Craigmuir Ridge—Ziah Quayle saves a Shipwrecked Mariner 73

CHAPTER XIV.

The Widow's Story continued—How the firm of M'Leod & Co. was saved 80

CHAPTER XV.

The Widow's Story continued—How John Stallibrass won Ronald M'Leod a Wife 87

CHAPTER XVI.

The Widow's Story concluded—How John Stallibrass won a Wife for himself 94

CHAPTER XVII.

PAGE

The Guest in Ziah Quayle's Cabin receives a Revelation . . 101

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sandy Muir makes a Revelation to his Host which astonishes him 106

CHAPTER XIX.

The Astonishment increases, and Ziah Quayle is taken Prisoner . 111

CHAPTER XX.

Tells the Truth about the *Deucalion*—Ziah Quayle and Sandy Muir become Conspirators 118

CHAPTER XXI.

Ziah Quayle has a Bit o' Business, and secures the Influence of Two Friends at Court 125

CHAPTER XXII.

Ronald M'Leod receives a "Deppitation," and Ziah Quayle Forgets his Manners 131

CHAPTER XXIII.

Gives a Peep at Weyburn Castle, and Introduces its Noble Owner 138

CHAPTER XXIV.

Lord Weyburn comes to a Quick Decision, and the *Highland Lassie* stands out to Sea 144

CHAPTER XXV.

The *Highland Lassie* drops Anchor in the Harbour of Honolulu . 150

CHAPTER XXVI.

Lord Weyburn becomes a Son of Consolation, and Sandy Muir Speaks his Mind 155

CHAPTER XXVII.

PAGE

Tells how Ziah Quayle went in quest of "Fairin's," and with what Success 161

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Fairin's give Ziah much anxiety and "the Bairns" much delight 166

CHAPTER XXIX.

Tells how Lord Weyburn and Ronald M'Leod made an Excursion to Fletcher's Farm 171

CHAPTER XXX.

Sandy Muir makes first an Impression and then a grand Discovery 177

CHAPTER XXXI.

John Stallibrass is in Prison, but he is favoured with Gentle Jailors 184

CHAPTER XXXII.

Lord Weyburn gives a Quotation; Bella Strachan makes an Attack 189

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Mr. Fletcher tells how John Stallibrass was Rescued, and how he came to be in Prison 194

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ronald M'Leod obtains a valuable Autograph—The Prisoner desires to go Home 199

CHAPTER XXXV.

Ziah Quayle receives a Letter—Timber-toe is subjected to unusual Treatment 205

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Ziah Quayle is under Examination, and has "a Bit o' Business, special like" 211

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PAGE
In which Bella and Lord Weyburn are much interested . . 217

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Lord Weyburn and Bella Strachan "will both take John Stallibrass Home" 223

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Ziah Quayle expresses a Strong Opinion on the Subject nearest to his Heart 229

CHAPTER XL.

Ronald M'Leod Scores a Point, and Sandy Muir has an "Idea" 235

CHAPTER XLI.

John Stallibrass and Sandy Muir come Face to Face, and the Prisoner is Free 241

CHAPTER XLII.

Half a dozen Conspirators hold a Council at the Fisherman's Arms 247

CHAPTER XLIII.

Trixie comes to Ziah Quayle's assistance, and Mamma's Fairin' comes to hand 252

CHAPTER XLIV.

A "Cottage Interior;" Ziah Quayle talks to the Neb; and Sandy Muir has a word with Ziah 257

CHAPTER XLV.

Has a Kindly and Final Word to say about all and sundry . . 263

HONEST JOHN STALLIBRASS.

CHAPTER I.

GIVES THE READER A PEEP AT CRAIGMUIR—A GLIMPSE OF THE NEB—AND A GLANCE AT THE RIDGE.

I AM not sure that you will find the name of Craigmuir on any map less elaborate and inclusive than those which owe their origin to the British Survey. That most important and in every way desirable national work is to be completed some day; at least, so it is said. I am afraid, however, that like "the good time coming" which we have sung about so much and waited for so long, the exact date of its arrival is both very difficult to fix and very far away.

In the absence of any such assistance, I must inform my readers that Craigmuir is a small village, very old, but not particularly picturesque, situate, as the lawyers say, on the north-east coast of Great Britain, and within a few miles of the place where the land of "Merrie England" touches on the "land of the Wallace and the Bruce."

The inhabitants of the village, though by no means numerous as to quantity, are remarkable in point of quality, for they are a happy combination of all that is best in the characteristics of the people of both countries, with a little preponderance in favour of the Scot, perhaps, seeing that they reside on the northern side of the border. According to my thinking, any such combination will produce a race of human beings difficult to match and impossible to excel.

Craigmuir is the home and haven of a brave and hardy band of fisherfolk, whose small fleet of fishing smacks, or cobles, as they prefer to call them, are as well known all along the eastern coasts of our island, as their crews are famous for skill, honesty, industry, and endurance, and as they rove from Inverness to Deal, that betokens a very considerable celebrity indeed.

In the one long narrow main street of the village, along the quay and around the little harbour, there is generally an all-pervading smell of fish. And no wonder; for what with fresh fish, and what with salt fish, what with fish in process of conversion from the one condition to the other, and what with the fishiness that attaches more or less to all the articles employed in that process, fish is present to the dwellers in the village of Craigmuir through all the seasons and all round the year.

Nevertheless, the cottage homes of Craigmuir, whitewashed without, tidy and clean within, with their snug-looking thatch, their trim bit of garden ground, and their general aspect of industry and thrift, show clearly enough that they are the homes of a happy and con-

tented people. The children, too, would be sure to win honourable mention in any competition where plumpness, chubbiness, and the "clean as a new pin" kind of look happened to be in request.

At present the village has not obtained any public reputation as a health resort, a character to which, in these days, every place within sight of the sea is bent on laying claim; although its title thereto is as good as any, and a great deal better than some that might be named. I have been in the habit of going there, year by year, for more than a quarter of a century, and I am quite sure that there are few places washed by "Britain's silver seas" where that precious possession health is likelier to be regained when lost, or where the fagged and jaded mortal "below par" is likelier to rise even to a premium, to follow the same figure of speech, than on the breezy moors and broad white sands, or the heathery, furze-clad uplands, around the village of Craigmuir.

For several years in succession this little out-of-the-world corner has been my home and haven too. After months of moil and toil, of wear and worry in crowded city life, I confess that I have no taste for the so-called liveliness and fashion which mark our most popular health resorts. A good long spell of real rest, and unbroken quiet, together with plenty of stimulating ozone; lofty hills to climb, the big broad sea to gaze at and bathe in and sail on, good plain rustic fare and favour, cheerfully supplied and cheap withal,—*that* is the sort of thing I want, and that is just what I get *ad libitum*, and many other good things to boot, in the little fishing village of Craigmuir.

Neither are the natural beauties of the place either few or small. In addition to the ever-grateful, never-palling presence of the "dark blue sea," whose peculiar music, whether in stormy roll or gentle ripple is always delightful; whose ever-changing hues reflected from ever-changing skies are always fresh and fair, the coast line on either hand presents all the pleasant contrasts of wooded heights, cultured fields, bosky glens, green slopes, rugged cliffs, and gleaming sands, that can in reason be desired.

But besides all this, Craigmuir boasts the possession of the bluffest, boldest, and most imposing headland to be found along all the north country side. Craigmuir Neb, or "The Neb," as the villagers familiarly call it, is really a local lion of no mean interest, and much more than local in its notability. Near its craggy and projecting summit, its outline closely resembles the beak of an eagle or some other monster bird of prey. Hence its name; for Neb in northern parlance denotes a bird's bill.

The Neb is a steep, precipitous cliff of uncommon shape and size, and looms with quite a stately grandeur over the white cottages and trim gardens of the village of Craigmuir. It is the pride of the villagers; it is a famous and effective landmark for homeward-bound mariners; and, alas! alas! it is also the fate of many a gallant bark which has been driven against its iron sides in the hour of the tempest and the storm.

About a mile or so out to sea, and in a direct line with the dark and frowning Neb, probably a part of the same formation, there is a long, low reef of dark-coloured rocks, which is known as the Craigmuir

Ridge, or the "Rig," as the term runs in the local dialect. There are two peaks about the centre of the reef, which stand boldly up above high-water mark, and these are known by the ominous name of the "Gravestones," or as the word is modified both in form and significance by local usage, the Graystuns. The full and more sombre name, however, is but too appropriate to that fatal spot.

This reef, and especially these peaks, are the terror of navigators in those regions. Treacherous currents from all quarters seem to set directly towards this point, with uncommon suddenness and strength. To see the white surf churning and boiling round those black crags that show above the sea, or to hear in the distance the ominous roar and dash of its remorseless surge, is to impel every careful skipper or skilful pilot to turn his helm with speed, and to make for the offing without delay. These swirling waters have swallowed up many a gallant ship; and many and many a drowned mariner has found a grave fathoms deep among the shifting sands below.

However proud the simple villagers of Craigmuir are of the Neb, and they do regard it as a rare endowment, they have very little that is boastful to say about the Ridge. To their simple, "auld warld" kind of imagination, it seems to be the lair of an evil spirit, a sort of marine ogre with a hunger for human flesh, and a thirst for human blood. They regard the place as a kind of witches' cauldron, of which they seldom speak without a creeping awe and bated breath.

In the little grass-grown churchyard, and under the

shadow of its square, squat, ivy-covered tower, there are many rude memorials of the dead, on whose stone faces is carved the grim record of the death of fisherman or boy, and sometimes of a whole fisher-crew who were sucked down into the depths by the whirling eddies of the "Rig." With the "Neb" and the "Rig" this brief but thrilling and veracious narrative has much to do. I may be forgiven, therefore, for introducing them so fully to my readers.

CHAPTER II.

MAKES THE READER ACQUAINTED WITH ZIAH QUAYLE, "A FINE OLD SALT."

On one fine, fresh autumnal afternoon, I was sauntering along the pebbly beach, and near the small and rickety pier that did duty for a quay. I was greeted by an old sailor whose acquaintance I had made during a former visit, and whose cheery smile and nod of welcome invited further conversation. He was seated on the edge of an old, dilapidated boat, which, having long since finished its mission in life, was left high and dry upon the beach to crumble to pieces beneath the influence of sun and weather, or in the tempestuous swell of some unusually high spring tide, to make its last voyage by being carried out to sea.

Ziah Quayle, as the old salt was called, was "quite a character," and almost as much an essential feature of Craigmuir as the stately Neb itself. Ziah Quayle is closely connected with, and has so much to do and say in the truly remarkable story I am about to tell, that I must honour him with full and special introduction.

Grizzled and grey was Ziah Quayle, with wind and weather, rough travel and much of it, and this made him look much older than he really was. A passing glance would have estimated his years at full three

score at least. But if it were possible to examine the ill-kept and almost non-kept register of Craigmuir parish church, for Ziah was Craigmuir born and bred, it would be found that that was an over-estimate of full seven years or more.

Ziah's brown face and curiously formed head would have presented many salient points for the special attention of a phrenologist; notably his broad forehead, indicative of strong intelligence, his somewhat long and slightly bulbous nose, equally indicative of humour and good temper. His small and twinkling grey eyes overflowed with kindly light, while his cheeks and chin, thoroughly guiltless of beard or whiskers, exhibited a degree of energy and resolve that proclaimed him, like the sword of Scott's highland hero, to be "good at need."

Ziah had been brought up to the sea, had passed almost all the years of his boyhood on board a fishing coble, as his forefathers had done before him. But life in a fishing smack was altogether too tame and humdrum a kind of thing for Ziah, so he determined to go abroad and see the world. He had seen it, with a vengeance, and had kept on seeing it until, as he said, he had to "set up a timber-toe, and lay himself up in ordinary." I may say here, that his natural and more serviceable limb had been dishonestly and unceremoniously appropriated by a hungry shark while its rightful owner was bathing in a tropic sea.

Ziah Quayle, as I have said, had been all round, and almost all over, the wide world. He had sailed on every sea, and had swung his hammock in almost every sort of craft that floats. He had experienced almost

every kind of adventure, and had been engaged in almost every description of employ. He had spent some years on board a man-of-war, and still gave evidence in his smart and upright bearing of the training he had there received.

In his later years, however, he had served, and had served well and faithfully, on board a nobleman's yacht. In company with his adventurous lord, the Marquis of Weyburn, he had travelled through strange lands, had been in strange company, and had seen strange sights. With him he stalked the antlered elk in snow shoes in Upper Canada. Perched on the back of an elephant he had tracked the royal Bengal tiger to his lair, in India. He had hunted kangaroo on the plains of Australia; and had speared salmon by torch-light on the rivers of Norway. He had pursued the ungainly ostrich over the burning sands of South Africa; and then, by way of change, had harpooned whales, alike in the Arctic and the Southern Seas. Surely Ziah might well be called, what old Mandeville calls himself, a "much travelled man."

It was while he was in the service, the confidential service of Lord Weyburn, that Ziah had the misfortune to lose his leg. That generous and thoughtful nobleman, of whom more hereafter, proving himself noble in another and a higher sense, gave the travel-scarred and faithful servant a small but sufficient pension and sent him home. So with a comfortable maintenance secured to him for life, the limping wanderer came back to Craigmuir to live and die, and as he put it, to "lay his old bones under the shadow of the dear old Neb."

It may be well imagined that Ziah, being such a great traveller, was chokeful of strange experiences and odd stories; and as he was a capital hand at spinning a yarn, and had considerable powers of imagination in the stating of his facts, there was lodged within him a "surprise power" of very remarkable strength. The boatmen of the village were never tired of listening to his narrations of "moving accidents of flood and field," told willingly enough, and all for their delight. They, too, in their turn, delighted to hold forth to chance visitors concerning his doughty deeds, Ziah himself the while being a modest and self-contained, but no doubt self-satisfied listener and looker-on.

How he came to be called "Ziah," and what was the missing portion of his name, nobody seemed to know; a circumstance not much to be wondered at, perhaps, viewed in the light of the fact that he always professed himself to be unable to tell. In answer to all inquiries on the subject, he said that he "was Ziah because he had always called himself so; so had his father before him; so had other folks, and that he always came when he *was* called," and that "there was an end of it."

"Besides," he would say, "Ziah, plain Ziah, without an 'andle to it, is quite as useful, an' a precious sight 'andier, than as if it was as long as a marlin' spike or a 'ank o' splicin' cord."

So Ziah it was, and Ziah it is, for the old fellow is still living, hale and hearty, and Ziah, to all appearance, it will be to the end of the chapter. But whether it is Josiah, or Isaiah, or Amaziah, or any other name of Bible origin, must remain, like the first of the

Sybilline leaves, or the secret of Edwin Drood, or the lost books of Euclid, a mystery for evermore.

There was a rich vein of quiet humour in the honest old salt, and there were few things connected with my lengthy sojourn at Craigmuir which afforded me more interest and amusement than a long chat with Ziah Quayle, most of the chat, however, being on his side, and most of the listening on mine.

It only remains for me to say that Ziah's rather lanky nether limbs were usually encased in clean white duck—he boasted that he was "his own washer-woman"—that a thick woven blue guernsey did duty for a waistcoat, that a red silk kerchief, tied in a loose knot, sailor fashion, was worn around his neck, that a short pilot jacket of rough cloth, adorned with immense bone buttons, invested his upper man, and that he wore on his grey head a black, shiny, low-crowned hat when the weather was fine, and a heavy, long-flapped, tarpaulin head-gear when "the skies poured out water," and when the air was thick with storm.

Such, gentle reader, was and is the portrait of Ziah Quayle. Mark him well, and aided by such delineations to complete the picture as will subsequently appear, my belief is, that you will admire the frank and kindly old tar as much as I do, and will feel inclined to say of him when you close these pages, "We shall not look upon his like again."

CHAPTER III.

TELLS HOW THE NEB HAD DONNED ITS NIGHTCAP, AND WHAT IT PORTENDED.

THE old sailor jumped from his seat on the edge of the dilapidated boat at my approach, stood at attention with his hand and arm level with his shiny broad brim by way of salute.

"Well, Ziah," said I, "I need scarcely ask 'how does the world use you.' I think you are even more hale and hearty than when I saw you last. It's a pleasure to see you anyhow, and a greater pleasure to see you so thoroughly 'up to the mark,' as they say."

"Ay, ay! Thank yer honour, an' the same to you, every word on't. You look to me as though *you'd* been sailin' afore the breeze since you was last i' these parts, wi' neither head winds nor choppin' seas. Them as thanks God for fine weather, may trust Him when the weather's foul."

"What fine weather we are having," said I, though even as I spoke I was sensible of a certain change and chilliness in the air.

The old sailor's face assumed a serious and even anxious expression as he pointed upward to the frowning Neb.

"We shall soon see the end on't, sir. There's that up there that tells o' something different. The old

Neb's gotten his nightcap on, sir, an' the wind's gone nor'-east. There'll be some wicked weather afore mornin'."

According to Ziah Quayle's homely fashion of putting things, the Neb, when its summit was hid in mist, had donned its cotton cap, and that was not a token of extraordinary weather of any kind, though the probabilities ran in favour of fine. But when a heavy mass of cloud settled on its brow, or as Ziah put it, when the Neb donned its nightcap, that was not only a sign of bad weather, but in certain circumstances portended a dangerous storm.

"Look you, sir," continued Ziah, pointing to the roughening swell upon the sea, "old Neptune's beginnin' to show his teeth already."

"Ah," said I, observing the whitening crests that flecked the sea, and the dun and angry pall of vapour that hid the projecting beak from sight; "I've heard that the Neb's nightcap is regarded with apprehension and alarm. But is it a sure omen?"

"When the wind's i' that quarter, an' when it's this particular time o' year, an' wi' the nightcap o' that particular colour an' shape, it's as sure as death. Ay, an' death it'll be, I'se afeared, to some poor fellows. Them that's on the sea i' these here roads atween sunset and sunrise 'll do well to keep their keel well out i' the offin'; else you may be sure that the Neb and the Rig atween 'em 'll make matchwood o' their craft, an' food for fishes o' them, as sure as eggs is eggs."

"God forbid," said I, much impressed by Ziah's earnest manner. Scanning the whole line of the horizon with my pocket telescope, I was relieved to

find that there was no sail in sight, except indeed a large steamer or two, which might be expected to get out of harm's reach before the storm had reached its height.

"I mind me," said Ziah, "that the Neb wore just the same sort o' cap when the *Deucalion* broke her back on the Rig nigh upon a couple o' years agone. My word, sir, but that was a storm, that was, such as I never see'd the like on', leastwise not i' these latitudes. But 'cordin' to my judgment, both Neb and Rig 'll feel its match afore the next twelve hours is past. God-a-marcy, *I* say, on all ships sailin' coastwise here away this night! 'Scuse me, sir. I must go an' warn the lads of what's a-comin'. Cool heads, brave hearts, an' willin' hands may be o' some use if the worst comes to the worst; an' them, thank God, Craigmuir's always gotten, ready for a dead lift."

So saying, Ziah Quayle moved away towards the village inn, and at a rate of speed that would scarcely have been expected from one whose dexter leg had been replaced by one of wood.

I turned slowly homewards. The old sailor's words and manner, and especially his reference to the wreck of the *Deucalion*, that ill-fated ship! filled me with sad forebodings. Even as I climbed the slope above the village, where my temporary home was fixed, the sky grew red and lowering. The wind was rising fast, and the sea also, and both combined to send forth that uncanny and gruesome sound that pioneers a tempest and gives prophetic warning of sorrow on the sea. Before I gained my shelter, the gusts of wind almost lifted me from my feet, the Neb and all the line of the cliff were wrapped in cloud; of the Ridge I could see nothing,

nothing but those two weird and ominous "Gravestones," and the boiling surf around, and out to sea those wrathful-looking "white horses," which were prancing over the rolling deep, the vanguard of the hosts of battle which were following fast behind. Half involuntarily, and then very earnestly, I repeated that beautiful litany for sailors :—

"Eternal Father, strong to save !
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep ;
Oh hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea !

"O Christ, whose voice the waters heard,
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep,
And calm amid its rage didst sleep;
Oh hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea.

"O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour ;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go ;
Oh hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea !"

With such thoughts in my mind, and with such words upon my lips, I struggled through the rising storm. I was glad to reach a haven of refuge, especially as the rain began to fall with that sharp swishing sound which promises a heavy downfall. I hastily crossed the threshold, and was just closing the door behind me when I heard a scream, a woman's scream, shrill and prolonged, and to my already sombre fancy

it seemed to come across the waters and from the direction of the Craigmuir Ridge.

I stood and listened, listened long and painfully. I looked wistfully through the blinding storm and through the gathering night, but I heard nothing, nothing but that weird and mournful monotone of blended wail of wind and moan of sea. Once within the house, however, I found new cause for anxiety and alarm. I was met at the door by the servant girl, who was in sad distress about her mistress and the children.

"O Mr. Ralph!" said she, with lifted hands and a look of terror on her face, "baith the mistress an' the bairns are oot i' the stour, an' what can ha' come till 'em, I canna' think!" and the kindly Scotch lassie lifted her apron to her eyes and indulged in the relief of a few tears.

It was indeed a more serious matter than may appear at first sight. I must therefore make the reader acquainted with the household in which I was temporarily located, and especially with my hostess, whose absence at such a time and in such a storm was a cause of grave anxiety alike to honest Elspie and myself.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW MARGARET STALLIBRASS CAME TO RESIDE IN THE COTTAGE BY THE NEB.

On previous occasions, during my holiday sojourn at Craigmuir, I had taken up my quarters at the Fisherman's Arms, a quiet and well-conducted hostel, of which Andrew Munro was the attentive and obliging host. On this occasion I was even more comfortably billeted at the house of a widow whose name was Margaret Stallibrass. She was very young to be a wearer of widow's weeds, not more than six or seven and twenty years of age, but she was old in trouble and sorrow. Her fair face was always pale, pallid indeed, and the large blue eyes, which must once have been lustrous beyond the common, were sad and heavy and red with the irritation of almost constant tears.

Her story was a very sad one. Her husband had been the captain and owner of a large merchantman trading chiefly between the port of Leith and the Southern seas. On an evil day he had been wrecked on the terrible Craigmuir Ridge, and had gone down with his gallant ship to find a grave fathoms deep amid the treacherous and ever-shifting sands below. It was said that nearly threescore human beings, counting passengers and crew, had shared the same sad fate;

and the awful catastrophe had made the day a dark memory in the annals of Craigmuir.

Among the few fragments of wreck that ultimately came ashore, was a shattered piece of timber which had evidently formed part of the bow of the vessel, with the letters "*-alion*" painted on it. A seaman's chest also floated to land. It contained several articles of clothing such as sailors wear, some natural curiosities and articles of foreign manufacture, which their hapless owner was doubtless bringing home for distribution among his friends. There was also a small pocket Bible in which was inscribed, with a bold, firm hand, the owner's name.

The letters on the board, together with the Bible in which Margaret Stallibrass recognised her husband's familiar penmanship, and the expected arrival of the vessel, made the matter all too clear and certain, and the heart of the young and stricken widow was all but broken by the shock.

And so it came to pass that the *Deucalion,* Captain John Stallibrass, was written off the register at Lloyds, and was inscribed instead on that other sad, sad register of heart-breaks, the melancholy and ever lengthening list of wrecks. The sad calamity was now fast fading from the memory of all, except the kindly fisher folk of Craigmuir, who lived hard by the fatal rocks, and of those bereaved ones whose relatives and friends had found a grave that awful night among the swirling waters of the Ridge.

Among the mourners whose dread heartache refused to be removed, and whose heart-sickness threatened to be even unto death, was my hostess, Margaret

Stallibrass. There were special features in her case, to be mentioned by and by, to account for this. She grieved ever and always, and refused to be comforted. Youth, strength, time, freedom from the straits of poverty had all been on her side in her terrible struggle with a crushing sorrow; her two little children, both of them winsome and beautiful, had been her staunch allies in the war. Yet in spite of all, the battle was always at the gate, the enemy would not be beaten back; the victory inclined more and more to darkness and death, if not to that absolute despair which is worse, far worse, than death itself.

There was a gloom upon her face, a sweet and attractive face even thus, that never lifted; a settled sorrow sat upon her heart; a dull, dead heaviness of soul seemed to take possession of her. On certain occasions, as for instance when she saw her noble husband's features reflected in the upward look of her handsome boy, what should have been a comfort, became only a reminder of her bereavement, and her grief became something pitiful to see.

"God help her!" I had often said to myself, before I became an inmate of her home. The ejaculation was unconsciously extorted by the sight of her ghostly face and her deep, dark mourning garb. "God help her! There is an icy chill at her heart which will carry her to her grave."

Soon after the crushing blow had fallen on the young widow, she had collected all her resources, gathered together all her domestic belongings, and came to reside in Craigmuir. A small but attractive and convenient dwelling, called "The Cottage,"

situated half-way up the hill slope above the village, happened to be vacant. This she bought, and here she had since resided. Led by an impulse which she could not resist, she had fixed her abode almost within sight of the hungry rocks among whose hidden depths all that was mortal of her lost darling lay; lay waiting the general resurrection, the one hope of this poor sorrowing woman—reunion in the land where there is no more parting and "no more sea."

There seemed to her to be some sombre consolation in living near her husband's grave. She kept herself considerably aloof from the villagers, which was a loss and a mistake. They nevertheless respected her grief and spoke with quiet admiration of her touching fidelity to the memory of her dead. They sought, too, in such small ways as were open to them, to comfort her. She was generally spoken of as "The Widow," and the name, and the tone in which it was uttered, contained the whole dark chapter of her sorrow, and the fairer story of their honest sympathy and true good will.

With Ziah Quayle, however, the poor lady was ever ready to converse. It was he who was on the look-out when the *Deucalion* went down. He it was who picked up the remains of the shattered bow and discovered the letters painted thereon; and in his keeping, by common consent, the seaman's chest was placed, which had hitherto remained unclaimed.

So it came to pass that in the warm-hearted and weather-browned Ziah, Maggie Stallibrass saw some link to her lost treasure. She "took to him," as the villagers said, and in a thousand ways he was of real

use and service to her. His willing heart, guided by the judgment of a sensible head, together with a native delicacy and tact, found in connection with a rough exterior far oftener than many people think, enabled him to befriend and succour the desolate widow and her orphan bairns.

With the two children, Georgie and Beatrice, the one some six or seven years of age, the other a golden-haired fairy of four, the kindly and cheerful old salt was a prime favourite. Who but he had hewn and modelled, and fitted with masts, spars, ropes and all, the trim little ship which was Georgie's great delight, and adorned it with the miniature Union Jack flying at the peak? And that bounding ball, trellissed in attractive patterns with brightly coloured wools of different hues, which was Trixie's peculiar joy, had been invested with all its beauty by the rude but skilful fingers of her "dear Ziah Quayle."

The stumpy sound of Ziah's wooden leg as he came limping along the garden walk of "The Cottage," as the widow's snug little nest was called, was greeted ever by a juvenile and jubilant shout of welcome, and was followed by a race pell-mell as to which could get the first grip of his horny hand or be hoisted on his tall shoulders for a "ride."

It was thoroughly amusing on these occasions to see how heartily the old sailor entered into the spirit of it, and the rougher the treatment he received the more delighted he seemed to be. Even Mrs. Stallibrass herself was compelled at times to join in the riot and aid in the fray; and when in some rare moment of forgetfulness her merry laugh rang out, its silver notes

told clearly enough what the lute had been capable of before the rift played havoc with its music.

As the two youngsters approached the old tar, Ziah would pretend to be afraid of the onset, and planting his timber-toe well forward in the gravel, so as to prevent a capsize, he would cry, "Hold hard, you young shavers! Helem-a-lee, I tell you; or you'll stove my bows in, an' I shall founder in sight of land! Then what would you do? Go into mournin', *I* reckon. Why the water would flow through your lee scuppers like a mill race, an' your flag would drop half-mast high."

Such was the footing of confidence, familiarity, and affection in which Ziah Quayle stood at "The Cottage." In all respects he was treated as a valued and trusted friend. In him the sad-hearted woman, whose sun had gone down while it was yet day, reposed implicit trust, to be in God's good time strangely rewarded and abundantly repaid.

CHAPTER V.

WIDOW STALLIBRASS IS OUT IN THE STORM, AND MEETS WITH A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

It was owing to Ziah Quayle's kind offices that I was received at "The Cottage" as a boarder during my stay at Craigmuir. The widow had certainly never intended to open its quiet precincts for any such purpose, and indeed she would have regarded herself as quite unequal to, if not unfit for, any settled duties of that kind.

What arguments the old sailor used to win her consent to this arrangement, this departure from her usual course of life, I cannot tell, though I can judge at least what was his main design. No doubt he put it as a special kindness to a stranger, seeing that the hospitality of the Fisherman's Arms was not available; and perhaps he had a notion that my payments might prove welcome replenishments to what was possibly an impoverished purse.

Mainly, however, Ziah's object was to compel the widow to engage in active duty, so that she would not have so much time for painful brooding. He rightly judged that companionship, employment, change, would be of real service to the sad and silent woman, who was eating her very heart away by too much converse with her grief.

And I certainly strove to the best of my ability to second his endeavour, and to carry out to the utmost his thoughtful and beneficent design. This, my years, for my hair is whitening with the snows of many winters, my hearty sympathies, and my desire to follow the example of the Man of Sorrows, and "to heal the broken-hearted," enabled me at least in some measure to accomplish. The reader will now understand the anxiety and alarm I felt on hearing Elspie's exclamation—

"O Mr. Ralph! baith the mistress an' the bairns are oot i' a' this stour! Them blessed bairns!" said she, for her heart was in the right place, though her head might have been adjusted with advantage to herself and others. "Them blessed bairns! They'll be blowed clean off their feet! An' the mistress, likely enough, is sittin' somewheres i' the dark an' the rain, a-moonin' an' a-frettin' an' forgettin' the darlins' as clean as if they wasn't there!"

I felt that Elspie's indictment was likely enough to be "ower true." Mrs. Stallibrass had doubtless gone for her customary walk along "The Wing." That was the local name given to a broad curving path along and around the landward slope of the cliff. Taken in connection with the projecting Neb, this chalky bridle-path was not unlike the outline of an enormous wing, and so increased the likeness of Craigmuir's rocky rampart to some huge bird of prey.

From this path, at certain points, there was a full view of the Ridge, and of the foaming waters that even in the calmest weather surged in boiling eddies about its base. Here, in fine weather, Margaret Stalli-

brass would permit the children to chase the butterflies, or pluck the flowers, or roll upon the heathery turf at their pleasure, while she would sit by the hour rapt, silent, distraught, gazing on the fatal spot where the *Deucalion* went down, thinking, brooding, grieving, holding communion with the dead.

I concluded that as usual she had gone like Mary "to the grave to weep there." Then I thought of the shrill scream that I had heard just as I reached the door, and fearing I know not what, I put on my overcoat with the intention of starting in pursuit of the missing three. The dark clouds had quenched the twilight of the brief autumn day sooner than usual; the wind was still rising, and the rain was coming down apace. If the wanderers are anywhere upon the Neb, thought I, they are in perilous straits indeed. Just as my hand was on the latch the door was suddenly opened, and Mrs. Stallibrass staggered across the threshold, with the little Beatrice in her arms, and Georgie tearful and frightened clinging to her side.

Elspie rushed forward and took the child from the fainting mother, whisked her arm around the waist of Master Georgie, and bore them into her own private dominions. Under her cheery influence they were soon able to tell her of the "big, big wind," of which, however it had filled them with alarm, they could speak proudly now by the snug haven of the kitchen hearth.

The young widow seemed thoroughly tired and spent, and the deathly pallor on her face filled me with new alarm. She dropped upon a chair by a little table near the window, laid her pale face, all

the paler for the masses of brown hair which the wind had loosened from its coil, upon her arms, and amid hysteric sighs and sobs she murmured—

"My husband! my husband! I have seen him. I saw him on the Ridge!"

So saying she became unconscious, fell into a swoon so deep, so deathly, that but for the faint pulsations at the wrist might well have been taken for death.

Fortunately for me, at any rate, Elspie was able to produce those pungent applications usually resorted to on such occasions, and ultimately the over-wrought brain seemed to stumble back to sense and life. But she was still strange, odd, abstracted. It seemed to me as if her mind was absent from her body, had gone otherwhere, and only a sort of mechanical life remained.

"Don't trouble, Mr. Ralph," she said, "I shall be better by and by,—ought to be better now, for I have seen what I have prayed for through all the weary months. I have seen John, and as plainly as I see you now!"

I was quite convinced that her mind was wandering, and I judged it best to say but little, and that little was intended, vainly, I must own, to direct her thoughts into another channel. By and by, when Elspie brought in the tea, the widow joined me at the table, but the meal was almost a silent one. If she spoke at all in answer to some question or remark of mine, she lifted dull eyes upon me from which the life had gone out. The "windows" were there, but that which should "look out of the windows" was darkened; and yet not quite that, her eyes seemed to

look beyond me into mystery, as she whispered some totally irrelevant reply, not knowing, as I think, what she said.

I noticed that every now and then she would hold her cup mid-way to her lips, as if she were listening to the wind which howled and roared without, and to the booming of the waves as they broke against the flinty face of the Neb. Was she thinking of that other storm, so wild, so stern, so pitiless, which had torn from her for ever the strong-limbed, warm-hearted, high-souled husband, whom she still loved and worshipped with all the strength of her woman's heart?

Now and again she lifted her eyes to the door, and fixed them there, as if she expected that some one was about to enter. Then she would gaze awhile as fixedly on the darkened window, against which the wind, blowing in violent gusts, was driving the falling rain, as though she was expecting to see a face pressed against the pane, and familiar eyes peering in upon her.

I confess that I felt strange myself. There was something so weird, so eerie, so uncanny, as Elspie suggested, about her, that the atmosphere of the room seemed to be embued with the supernatural. I half expected to see something strange, and as if an apparition of some kind must certainly appear.

At length the poor girl, for in truth she seemed little more, heaved a great sigh, broken by involuntary sobs; she gasped once or twice as if to recover and bring back her wandering spirit to its home again. Then she turned to me, not with a far-off,

but with a sort of home-coming look in her blue eyes, as though her errant and fugitive soul had found its familiar home again. Still there was a dazed uncertainty in her face and voice, as she said in a low whisper—

"Could it—can it be a dream! No, *no*, NO! I tell you I have seen my husband. This night! out upon the Ridge! and again beside the garden-gate!"

CHAPTER VI.

TELLS OF ZIAH QUAYLE'S IMPORTANT MISSION TO THE FISHERMAN'S ARMS.

THE Fisherman's Arms was a long, low, many-gabled and old-fashioned hostel. It stood pretty nearly midway in the one long and narrow street of which the village of Craigmuir was mainly composed. It was placed at a considerable distance back from the general line of houses; and the intervening space, paved with stones and kept scrupulously clean, was occupied by a long trough kept full of water, and a rude spindled rack or manger on four legs, holding generally a small supply of hay. These were for the refreshment of those horses whose riders or drivers did not choose to "put up," but regarded and used the inn as a convenient breathing-place,—a literal house of call.

In this open space stood also the tall, stout post from which the signboard swung, and swinging, made creaking announcement of "good accommodation for man and beast." This signboard was quite an extraordinary work of art. On it was a picture, two pictures of which it may be well and truly said, they were "fearfully and wonderfully made."

On the one side was the counterfeit presentment of a Craigmuir fisherman, equipped in his broad flapped tarpaulin, coarse canvas tunic, and girt from groin to

hob-nailed boots in tarry leggings, defiant of salt water. In one hand he grasped an oar held blade upwards and resting on the ground. In the other hand he held the corner of a net whose dimensions were represented by a jumbled heap at his feet. Judged by any ordinary rule of proportion, either the fisherman was a dwarf or the oar was a giant of its kind, and in either case the net would have sufficed to imprison the sea serpent, so enormous was its bulk. On the other side was a fishing smack in full sail upon a sea of utterly impossible blue. There was a rocky coast, a headland and a lighthouse as a background. Here again the proportions were bewildering, and the perspective gave the impression that by climbing the mast of the coble you could have lit the lighthouse lamp. There was an originality and ingenuity manifest in both paintings that reflected infinite credit on the artist, who had disdained to be governed by any known precedents or to be restrained by any conventional rules of art.

This ancient inn had another frontage which faced the beach. Except for the fact that no artistic symbol swung on that side, it would have been hard to tell which was intended by the architect to be the main entrance. Over the seaward porch a long board displayed the legend, "The Fisherman's Arms," in big letters that might have been read through a sailor's telescope half a dozen miles out at sea, though it may be doubted whether it would avail to induce the observer to "pull up" or tack for the shore to test the quality of Andrew Munro's treble X.

A long stretch of pebbly beach lay between the inn and high-water mark. This was strewed with boats,

an occasional fishing smack, hauled up for repairs, anchors, chains, spars, and other kinds of shipping gear. Here also nets were spread for drying or for mending; big brown sails were extended to be patched by deft and skilful fingers. Here at all times and seasons might be seen fishermen, boatmen, that nondescript class known as "long shore men." Take it altogether, this was by far the most stirring and lively portion of the village, not excepting the quay, unless indeed an unusually successful "take of herrings" or of mackerel brought an unusual number of full nets on shore.

It was well that the fisher folk of Craigmuir were both by race and from principle a sober people, otherwise the ever-present facilities for drinking strong liquors afforded by the all too handy hostel might have been a source of much mischief. As it was, there were a few, as there always are, and, I was going to say, always will be, who could not withstand the perilous temptation. They crossed the threshold of the Fisherman's Arms, and lifted the brimming pewter to their lips far oftener than was expedient either for themselves or their families, and at last, recrossed it with difficulty, to reel homeward with a vacuum in their pocket and a swimming in their head.

To the busy spot I have just described, came Ziah Quayle after our brief conversation by the side of the disabled boat. No sooner was the old sailor seen stumping along on his wooden leg at the rate of six good knots an hour, than Andrew Munro, mine host of the Fisherman's Arms, who was leaning against his porch chatting with a few idle neighbours, called out—

"Hallo! here's Ziah coming; bearing down on us

like a stormy petrel, and on much the same errand, or I'm a Dutchman. The old weather prophet sees that out to windward, and on the crown o' the Neb, that wants sharp lookin' after. I've a notion, myself, that there's goin' to be a big bluster afore mornin'."

"Ay, ay," responded Dave Miller, who occupied the position at the inn of general man of all work, and was boots, coachman, waiter, stable-boy, and boatman, too, if needs be. "Ziah Quayle's like an old hound, an' never gives tongue till there's a clear scent on the wind. When he comes limping along like that with all sail set, an' his bows straight for the inn, you may be sure that something else is comin' faster than him, something that's neither so kindly nor so good-tempered."

"Well, old shipmate! what cheer?" said another of the little knot of gossipers as Ziah came up. "What's i' the wind now?"

Ziah planted his timber-toe well forward, so as to keep his balance against the rising wind, and lifting his glazed hat to wipe away the perspiration from his brow, he answered concisely and emphatically—

"A storm!"

"Do you think so, Ziah?" said Andrew Munro.

"I'se sure so," said Ziah; "a storm as *is* a storm! A storm big enough an' strong enough to blow the hair off a wooden figure-head; an' for the matter o' that, to blow the figure-head an' the craft that carries it, into shivereens if she comes within a mile o' Craigmuir Rig! It'll blow great guns as it hasn't blowed 'em since the *Deucalion* broke her back again the Gra'stuns nigh a couple o' years agone!"

"Hand-spikes an' anchors!" said Stephen Braidwood, the captain and part-owner of a fishing smack, "then I must go an' look after the health of the *Lady Jane*, or she'll be leading me a dance more lively than lovely, I'm thinking;" and the speaker at once proceeded on his prudent errand.

"Run up the signal, landlord," said Ziah. "Haul your craft up high and dry!" he continued, for the benefit of all and sundry. "Then we shall be ready to lend a helpin' hand, as far as wind an' sea 'll let us, if any poor craft drifts Nebward or Rigward. God-a-marcy on all afloat i' these roads this night, for I'se feared man can do but little for 'em!"

As the old tar uttered these words solemnly and with deep feeling, he bared his grey head to show that he meant it for a prayer. Silence, broken only by a general murmur that meant "Amen," and was so heard and understood in heaven, fell upon the by-standers. Then each went his several way to prepare as well as might be for the tempest that the swelling waves and rising wind proclaimed was nigh at hand.

Having accomplished thus much of his self-imposed and beneficent mission, Ziah Quayle proceeded to enlist the aid of a few well-chosen seamen, whom he had formed into a sort of local life brigade. In a little while ropes were ready, a boat which did duty as a lifeboat was prepared for launching, materials for kindling a beacon fire were heaped together, and finally a watch was set to keep a sharp look-out, and give timely signal in the event of any sign and token of peril and sorrow on the sea. By this time the wind was blowing furiously dead ashore. The billows,

rolling higher and higher, fringed with angry crests of foam, rushed swiftly toward the steep blank iron walls of the Neb, and broke in leaping blotches against its sullen face.

Tired with toil and travel, and sad with a nameless fear of coming trouble, Ziah retired to his little cottage. "The Cabin" he had called it, a low, one-storied tenement, standing on the slope above the village, and about half-way between it and the higher point where Widow Stallibrass resided. Here Ziah indulged in a good wash and a strong cup of tea, which he enjoyed all the more that his previous labours had been devoted to the high and holy charities, that, according to my thinking, are one of the highest and holiest features of true religion.

Ziah Quayle was religious in a quiet and unostentatious fashion, the most genuine fashion that, by the way. He took down a well-thumbed Bible that had travelled with him nearly all round the world, read a few verses concerning Him who walked the waves of Galilee, and who saved imperilled mariners from the raging storm: then he bent his grey head upon the book, and in a few brief, simple words of true prayer, he asked of Him who holds the winds in His fist and the water in the hollow of His hands, that in His infinite mercy He would pity and preserve such storm-tossed voyagers as were out upon the sea that night and near that fatal coast.

We may not know in this veiled life of narrow limits how far the old veteran's prayers were answered, or how much they had to do with the subsequent events of this strange history. But of one thing the

reverent believer in Revelation and in the perpetual activities of an over-ruling Providence is always well assured, that—

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. . . . . .
> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW LITTLE TRIXIE MADE A WISE SUGGESTION, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

It will be imagined that the evening meal at the table of the widow Stallibrass was, under the circumstances, only a poor pretence. It was a relief when it was over, and the almost untasted viands were removed. Then I set myself the difficult task of diverting the young widow's thoughts into a healthier and less exciting channel. I tried every topic which I had found to interest her heretofore. Then I called in from the kitchen merry Master Georgie and the winsome little Beatrice, that they might unconsciously help me to drive away the surging sorrow, and to exorcise the spirit of melancholy whose morbid influence seemed to threaten alike her reason and her life.

I saw that she understood my purpose and was grateful. I saw that she did her best to make common cause with me against the suffocating heart-break. But it seemed to be all in vain; and as I watched the growing pallor of her features, the preternatural brightness of her eye, and the restless movements of her hands, all the while that the storm howled and screamed like one in pain, I became seriously alarmed for her, and wist not what to do.

I took the children back to the kitchen and placed

them under Elspie's care. On our way thither, little Beatrice, lifting to my face a clouded countenance and a tearful eye, said simply—

"Uncle Ralph"—that was the style and title by which the children at their own request addressed me —"Uncle Ralph, does God know that dear mamma is sad? Hadn't we better tell Him?"

"Yes, Trixie," chimed in George, "God knows everything. But mamma says that He likes us to tell Him things for all that."

"Then let's tell Him about mamma," said downright Trixie. "Will you, Uncle Ralph?"

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings I was rebuked, and instantly resolved on trying the children's plan.

"Yes, darlings," said I, as we crossed the kitchen threshold. "You must ask Him to help and comfort dear mamma, and so will I."

For many a long year I had been in the happy habit of commending myself and my ways to the care and guidance of the God of my life; and though grey hairs were at this time a good deal more than here and there upon me, I had ever found Him to be faithful and true.

I returned to the little sitting-room where Mrs. Stallibrass still sat, sad and silent, leaning her head upon her hand. Standing by her side, I lifted up my heart and my voice to the all-gracious Father, the Divine Brother, the Faithful Comforter, who can always succour and soothe sore hearts where human skill is vain.

"God help her!" I said. "O Christ, all-pitiful,

come and pour Thy healing balsam into this stricken and sore-wounded heart. Mrs. Stallibrass," I continued, "I am afraid you forget His word who has said, 'A father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, is God in His holy habitation.' The cloud is dark, and your load is heavy, but He can scatter the one and lift the other. God's ways are mysterious, but *God is good!*"

"That is what John said out on the Ridge to-night," said the widow. "It was a favourite word of his,—'God is good.'"

She repeated the words softly, slowly, and then paused. It was not a promising answer, and seemed to show that her mind still ran in the groove of what I considered to be the delusion of a distempered mind. But I misread its effect. The words served as a key to open the flood-gates of her tears. This was an instant relief to her pent-up feelings, a safety valve that eased the strain and surely saved her heart from breaking.

"Did he?" I said, bent on making the most of it and turning it to good account. "Then depend upon it he said it with a purpose. God permitted him to say it to you, that it might heal your grief and dry your tears. In his happy and restful state he would not have you weep and sorrow over the wise and righteous doings of your Heavenly Father. God is good!"

She listened quietly, thoughtfully, and replied—

"God forgive me! God forgive me! When *shall* I get rid of this awful aching at my heart? Pray for me!"

Taught, thank God, where to go and what to do in this hour of need, I knelt by her side and prayed

aloud. I knew and felt that she also was trying to cast her burden on the Strong One. It was not in vain. Still the storm ran riot out of doors; still the wind soughed and moaned around the cottage; still the casements rattled, shaken by each resistless gust; still we heard the awful thud of the waves breaking on the broad flanks of the Neb. But within the cottage there fell a gracious calm. Peace had come at the bidding of the Great Wonder-Worker, and like an angel that meant to stay, entered and folded its fair wings within her heart. Another proof and token this, were proofs and tokens needed, of the power of prayer, of its sure resources, and of the tender pity and ever-present aid of the divine, unfailing Friend.

It was more than ever clear that the inward storm had passed, and that the young widow was herself again when she left the room to attend to her much-neglected toilet, and to give the children a reassuring smile and kiss, precious tokens to them that the tears were dried at last.

With radiant face Trixie welcomed the happy change. She imparted the information that she and Georgie had been "telling God," and that they both knew that dear mamma would be better by and by. Happy are they, whether young or old, who all their lives do make like simple appeal to Heaven in the day of need, and with a like simple and unquestioning faith!

Relieved of their load of grief,—and it is well to remember that little hearts can be very, very sore, especially, God bless them, when the sore is sadness for a mother's sorrow,—the two children were willing

enough and even eager to seek their pillow. Trixie, however, expressed a desire to "say her prayers to Uncle Ralph," which was not by any means such an act of idolatry as the words suggest. She only wished to take me into partnership in her joy and praise, as she had done in her grief and prayer. Moreover, she wanted a little help in shaping her devotions.

"Uncle Ralph," said the little maiden, as robed in a night-gown of spotless white, and with her golden hair falling loosely around her fair and smiling face, she climbed upon my knee, "Uncle Ralph, let me whisper in your ear. I want so much to tell God 'thank you' for making dear mamma nice again, and for mending her sad face. Will you tell me what to say?"

"Why, Trixie, dear," said I, "you can't do better than say to God just what you have said to me."

With little hands devoutly clasped, and her waxen lids closed over her eyes of winsome blue, she repeated her evening prayer, and wound up as usual with—"For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

"Oh, dear me!" she exclaimed, "I forgot to put it before amen, Uncle Ralph. Let me say it again."

In vain I strove to convince her that her new words of thanks might be tacked on after the final sanction. Nothing would do but she must start anew. Arrived at the proper point, she proceeded—

"And thank you, God, for making mamma nice again, and for mending her sad face,—and—and, if you please, don't let it come back no more, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

I said amen, too, right heartily; and so did Mrs. Stallibrass, who was standing in the doorway, smiling through her tears, and who received from God that night, through the lips of her little child, a message which did its mission, which never afterwards left her mind and memory, and never ceased to influence her life.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

"Good-night, my precious," said the mother, lifting Trixie to her arms; "sad face won't come back any more." And then, as the charming fairy bounded from the room, followed by the mother's swimming eyes, there fell from the mother's lips those words of submission and of trust, "God is good!"

Placing her chair near the table and hard by the lighted lamp, the widow sat clothed and in her right mind, and proceeding to ply her needle, she said—

"Now, Uncle Ralph, I should like to tell you what I saw on Craigmuir Ridge to-night, and again by our own garden-gate."

I suppose she noted the expression of anxiety that came across my face, and saw the look of alarm I gave her, for she added—

"Don't fear for me any more, dear friend; all that, by the help of God, is mastered, and as I hope and believe, is mastered once for all. But I want to tell you what I saw, or at any rate what I really thought I saw, while the storm was raging on the rocks where my husband's ship went down."

CHAPTER VIII.

RELATES WHAT MRS. STALLIBRASS SAW IN THE STORM UPON CRAIGMUIR RIDGE.

"THERE is no doubt, can be no doubt, I suppose," the widow said, "that what I saw was the delusion of a fevered and unhappy mind. Yet this much I will say, that nothing in this world that I ever saw or heard was more real, more evident, more substantial, than that which I saw and heard to-night, and which, I suppose, I must now regard as a fancy and a dream.

"It was a bright, calm afternoon, when I left the cottage with the children for our customary walk. As usual, I bent my steps towards 'The Wing' to get a sight of my husband's grave. A strange grave, is it not? And yet to me it always seems as though I know the very peak upon the reef at the foot of which he is lying in his grave of sand. For some time I sauntered to and fro with the children; I ran races with them; then we took to gathering the wild flowers that are still blooming. After a while I left them to their own devices. I sat down on a familiar mound in full sight of the Ridge, and was soon lost in mournful memories, and sad, sweet thoughts of my darling lost to me for ever."

"No, not for ever," I interposed. "Forgive me for interrupting you, but I shall do my best to help to answer Trixie's prayer."

"Right, dear friend," she replied with a calm smile and a quiet readiness of speech, which proved that she meant to be an ally in the same work. "We shall meet again, and with no more fear of parting.

"I was not aware that the wind had risen. I was too much engrossed with my own thoughts to note how heavily the nightcap was settling on the Neb. I was looking at the Ridge, which just then had a dense bank of black cloud behind it forming a sort of background, so that I could clearly see the Gravestones, and the white crest of every wave as it rolled up the crags and swept over them in sheets of foam.

"Suddenly a vivid flash of sheet lightning lit up the whole scene like a panorama, and lingered a while as if unwilling to die out again. The rocks stood up in bold relief, so that I could see every one of them standing clearly out with a belt of foam around it.

"As my eye rested on the higher rock, I said to myself, 'That is John's gravestone. Oh that I could go to his grave to weep there!'

"In a moment the clouds behind seemed to me to part in two, and, as if standing on a patch of light, I saw my husband. It seemed as though his feet were on the Ridge, and his form, giant-like in size, towered high up into the sky. I stood spell-bound and awe-struck. I tried to speak, but not a word would leave my lips. I stretched out my hands to him, but he never changed. He stood like a pillar. It seemed to me that there was a frown on his brow as he pointed his finger towards the Ridge beneath him. Then he lifted his hand and pointed upwards, and so stood still. I tell you, Uncle Ralph, his face and his form were as

clear to me as in life, but his figure was vast, and it seemed to me as if a light shone about him and from him that came from within himself.

"All at once the thought was borne in upon me, as though a spirit had whispered it to me, that I ought to point upward too. I felt as if I was compelled to do it by a force that I could not resist. I did so, and while my hand was lifted John bent towards me with a smile of approval, and then he disappeared.

"It seems a long time as I tell it, but I think it all happened really in that one long, silent flash of harmless lightning, and it happened, yes, it really must have happened, as I have told it to you.

"You will think me very foolish, nay, wicked, and I feel that I have been both, and ought to have been more submissive before God. Well, I thought if I waited a while he might perhaps appear to me again. Then I felt some rain drops on my face, and for the children's sake I came home. I cannot tell you how or what I felt during that homeward walk. I knew nothing of the thickening dark and of the rising wind. One thought seemed to absorb me and control me—a thought which every now and then found expression, —'O John, dear husband! smile on me once again!' When I reached the garden gate and turned to close it after me, again I saw my darling standing by my side.

"There was all the olden love in his eyes, but something strangely pensive too. It seemed to me also, that on one temple there was a dark blurr that I could not understand. I exclaimed, 'O John!' and advanced a step towards him. He receded; again his hand was

lifted heavenward. Again I felt that I must do the same; my will somehow seemed to be not my own, but his, as though he was thinking for me. No sooner did I point heavenward, too, than he smiled again. Then I heard his voice; I heard, as clearly as on the day he left me last, the dear familiar tones—

"'Right, Maggie, darling! *God is good!*'

"That was a common saying of his when he was alive. The words were often on his lips, because trust and thankfulness were ever in his good and grateful heart.

"I can scarcely account for the awful sadness which has taken hold upon me to-night. It may seem strange to you, and indeed is strange to me, but it is none the less true, that my mind seems to have been affected not for myself but for another; or rather that another's affected mind has been in me. But, there, I cannot understand it. I suppose it was a kind of reaction. It must have been something like Paul was, though, alas, not so happy, when he said, 'Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell.'

"Thank God it is now past. The whole of the last two years has been like one long, long dream, in which John Stallibrass *would* be a foremost figure in spite of all. The spell that bound me a prisoner to grief is broken. Thank you, dear friend, for your aid and comfort. I feel as if a new day had dawned upon me. I shall not make pilgrimage to the Wing for the sake of seeing the Ridge any more. I will think of John, *not there*, but in heaven. I will do my best to join him there. I will put my trust in my Heavenly Father, mine and John's, until we meet

again. God will care for me and our children, and all the while, God help me, I will remember and believe my darling's words, 'God is good.'"

The words were scarcely spoken when the old, absent look was in her eyes, which were opened wide; her mouth was parted, and her finger lifted as if to bid me hush! I did. I sat still, oppressed, impressed, feeling somewhat of her own strange supernatural tokens. Was it my sympathy with the young widow, or was it my fancy, or was it the sound of the wind without? Whatever it was, she heard, and I thought I heard a faint echo,—as from a near yet distant voice,—"God is good!"

It was a strange story. It made a deep impression on my mind, an impression made deeper still by that echo that still lingered on my ear. I am not superstitious. My mind runs, at least I think so, rather in the opposite direction. But I believe in God, and in the power of God to make mind impinge on mind without the aid of any physical medium or any instrumentality present to our senses. I have a definite and utter disbelief in so-called spiritualism; but those who will read this strange story to the end will not wonder at my belief that—

> "Souls are subtle and have subtle powers,
> Have kinships, motions, commerce one with other
> More than our dull brain tells. Spiritual chords,
> Electric, vibrant, span all distances,
> Elude all obstacles, and whisper thoughts."

"Mrs. Stallibrass," said I, after a lengthened pause, "yours has been a strange, and, as I should imagine, a very unusual experience. I dare not dogmatise

about it. But, at any rate, the conclusion of the whole matter is a thing to thank God for. God is good. For that blessed change in your mind and feeling, your husband, I doubt not, thanks God in heaven. I have been in great fear for you. Your grief was eating away your life, and you were forgetting your duty to those dear children as well as to your God.

"Our Heavenly Father never imposes a burden on us without having a wise and gracious end to answer; and for ever His gift of grace, if we seek it, shall be in proportion to the heaviness of our load and the necessities of our day."

At this point a familiar treble rap was heard at the door, and in a few moments Elspie opened the door to admit that ever-welcome visitor at the cottage, honest and faithful Ziah Quayle.

CHAPTER IX.

ZIAH QUAYLE DELIVERS HIS SENTIMENTS ON STORMS IN GENERAL, AND ONE IN PARTICULAR.

It was as much as Ziah Quayle could do, even with Elspie to help him, to close the door again, for the gale was now at its height, and made a bold rush for possession of the cottage. By dint of vigorous efforts, however, he managed at last to shut out the unceremonious and turbulent intruder. Then seating himself on the nearest chair, he paused a little to recover breath, and then emphatically gave utterance to his own unvarnished sentiments and opinions concerning the weather.

"'Pon my word!" said he, "but this 'ere is a reg'lar buster, an' no mistake! Talk about great guns! This 'ere's a general broadside from a big fleet o' seventy-fours. This nor'-easter's neither more nor less than gone stark, starin' mad! a ravin' an' rampageous old lunatic that's lost his keeper!"

Let me note here that honest Ziah always made it a point of conscience to put on a hearty jocosity, and to give full play to the humorous vein which was strong in him whenever he came to the cottage. It was his well-intended and often very successful way of opposing Mrs. Stallibrass's inveterate melancholia, and of giving the children an experience of a merrier

and more cheerful life than the usual condition of the home atmosphere supplied.

Doffing his hat deferentially to the widow, Ziah proceeded to explain the reason of his apparently untimely visit.

"Beg yer pardon, ma'am," said he, "for poppin' in so sudden an' promiscuous like, as the sayin' is, but if I hadn't come in flop I should ha' been blown clean through the port-hole, I mean the door."

"Never mind that, Ziah," said the widow heavily. "You know that *you* are always welcome, however or whenever you come in."

"Thank ye, ma'am, you've long since made that as clear an' as sartain as a bluff headland agen a blue sky. I was afeared, d'ye see, that ye would be just a trifle upset by this 'ere tremenjous hurricane, an' I couldn't turn into my hammock without knowing that you were all snug under hatches. My old cabin yawed an' heeled an' creaked as if she was partin' her timbers; an' I was afeared, as the cottage stands so high, an' catches the wind right in the eye, that the little craft would have the gale comin' broadside on, an'—an' so"——

"And so you were anxious about our safety, and came toiling up here in the storm to see if you could help us. Thank you, Ziah; you are always kind and thoughtful. But how in the world did you manage to get here at all, Ziah?"

"Why, as to that, ma'am," quoth Ziah, still breathing hard with his recent exertions, "there's no use o' denyin' that it was quite as much as I could manage to keep my legs, let alone forgin' ahead through such

a reg'lar buster as this 'ere. Old timber-toe," he continued, patting the thigh to which his wooden-leg was attached, "had to prod hard into the gravel to keep him going by the board, an' the scuffle made me blow like a grampus. Still I had the wind at my back, d'ye see, an' where I had the course clear to leeward, an' all sail on, I scudded along like a cutter in a regatta, an' so here I be. Gettin' back 'll be a roughish tussle, I 'spect, but I don't mind that, seein' as how you are all snug in your berth up here-away."

"Nay, nay, old friend," said Mrs. Stallibrass, "you must not think of going back until the wind lowers. It is no use anybody trying to sleep with all this awful storm and tempest dinning in our ears. Come into your usual corner, Ziah; light up your pipe and make yourself content."

I added my persuasions to those of the widow, and at length Ziah consented to remain. There was a long clay-pipe and a small jar of tobacco kept in a side cupboard for Ziah's special behoof. These were soon forthcoming, and in a little time Ziah was burning his idol, and making the little curling clouds of smoke to rise in a style that proved him to be thoroughly familiar with so orthodox a deed.

Ziah puffed away in silence for a little while, keeping his eyes fixed on the young widow with a look of pleased surprise.

"'Scuse me, ma'am," he said at last, drawing his pipe from his mouth, in order to give unimpeded expression to his opinion. "'Scuse me, ma'am, I feels as though it was worth while tacklin' this 'ere rumbustious nor'-easter, to see you lookin' so quiet

an' settled like. I ax yer pardon for takin' the liberty, but 'cordin' to my opinion, you're lookin' more ship-shape an' smilin' an' easy-minded than I've seen you look for a month o' Sundays. If this 'ere ekinoctial screamer's done the business, why let him scream, say I, until he's as husky as a bugler's horn with a cork in it. Indeed, ma'am, it's a sight for sore eyes!"

"Why, yes," said the widow with a smile, and in a tone that showed how much she was touched with the old sailor's earnestness; "I feel better in body and a good deal more comfortable in my mind than I have been any time since—since John went to heaven. I have to thank God, Ziah, as you say, for what He has sent me even in this dreadful storm."

"Hey, Mrs. Stallibrass! but that's a good hearin'," answered Ziah, who had forgotten for the moment the use of his pipe. "It's as pleasant as the chime o' church bells to the homeward-bound when the voyage is nearly done. It seems to me that storm has quite as much to do as shine i' bringin' marcies into port, always providin' as we've eyes to see 'em an' hands to seize 'em when they do come. I mind me that once when I was campin' out wi' Lord Wey-burn in an Indian jungle, we were roused out o' sleep by the roar of a tiger, an' a awful big roar it was! We rushed out to scare the ugly critter away. Then we found that the jungle was on fire not five hundred yards away, an' wi' the wind an' flame makin' straight for us. We had only just time to clear out an' clear off, or we might all ha' been burnt to a cinder an' nobody ha' been any the wiser. I've often thought since then that the ugly roar o' that tiger was a good

deal better a friend to us than a bit o' sweet music would ha' been. It doesn't so much matter *what* it is that does you a good turn, so long as it *is* a good 'un; an' sometimes a tremenjous hurricane may sarve your purpose better than a light capful o' wind on a sunny sea."

The widow nodded approval, and began to relate to the old sailor the remarkable events of the afternoon and evening. When she had told the story of her vision, she paused a moment, and I wondered what the sensible old salt would say to that strange experience. Ziah looked at her, and then at me; then he took a few draws from his pipe, prolonging the expulsion of each whiff of smoke as though he was gaining inspiration. At last he said slowly and thoughtfully—

"An' why not? Them as has gone out o' this 'ere life at the biddin' o' the Almighty can come back at His biddin' I 'spects. His orders has a habit o' gettin' theirselves done somehow, an' there's nobody to say *Him* nay. The sperrits o' them as is gone must be somewhere, an' wherever they are, He has 'em within call, *I* warrant. The Bible says the angels are His ministerin' sperrits, an' what's the souls o' them as goes to heaven *but* angels, I should like to know? An' so they must be ministerin' sperrits like t'others; an' he's told off Captain Stallibrass to minister to his widow. I reckon that's about as easy to see as a lighthouse lantern wi' no fog atween. Go on, ma'am."

The widow rewarded the old philosopher with an approving smile, and continued her narration. By and by she related the episode of little Trixie's interference in the matter of "telling God about it."

Ziah could not restrain himself. His honest eyes filled with tears, and his voice was tremulous with repressed feeling as he interjected—

"God bless 'er sweet little soul! An' so the Lord made her a minister sperrit like any other angel! The dainty little craft helped to pilot her mother's storm-tossed bark into a quiet haven an' a sheltered bay! Oh, the bonnie, bonnie bairns! God give 'em fair winds an' a kindly sea to sail on, say I, till such times as they drop anchor in the port o' New Jerusalem!"

"Amen!" said the widow, with great fervour, and finished her narrative with the golden words, "God is good."

"That you may take your solemn 'davy on, ma'am!" said Ziah, bringing down his big brown hand upon his knee to emphasise the statement. "An' the less we understand it, the more we may believe it; especially if we try, like Trixie, to get a encouragin' word an' a look from the Man at the Wheel!"

Then followed a pause of some duration, the widow lapsing into a thoughtful mood, and Ziah puffing away at his pipe with a vigour indicative of the strength of his emotions. He was thinking doubtless of darling Trixie, of the widow's better and holier frame of mind, and of the better and brighter days in store for the inmates of the cottage, whom the kindly old sailor loved as his own soul.

The silence was broken by Mrs. Stallibrass. Laying down the sewing on which she had been engaged, she said—

"I have no doubt, dear friends, that you have both

of you thought me very foolish, very ungrateful, and very wicked too, to give way so far and so long under the crushing stroke of bereavement which has so suddenly and sadly blighted my life in the very spring-tide of its promise, and wrapped me in the very shadows of the grave. I can see it myself now, and I own that I have been wrong, very wrong, to nurse this brooding misery, to my own sorrow, the injury of my two innocent and darling children, and the distress of dear and faithful friends; to say nothing of such a rebellion against the mysterious but unerring, and never unkindly, providence of God.

"But I want you both to know how great cause I have to mourn over my grievous loss. I propose to tell you as you sit here the story of my life and of my husband's, and how, as it seems to me, I may be in part at least forgiven for my indulgence in the luxury of grief over a calamity that seemed unrelieved and hopeless, never to grow less, and to defy either relief or cure.

"It will do me good to tell you the whole story, and it is due to your great kindness and sympathy that I should. It will help to pass the time until the storm is over, and best of all, it will show you what manner of man John Stallibrass was. No, I cannot, cannot hope to do that, but at any rate you will, I think, wonder less, when I have told my story, that when the sea robbed me of my treasure, the light of my life died so thoroughly out into the dark."

The widow's stirring narrative soon made us oblivious to the storm, which still held high revel over sea and land.

CHAPTER X.

THE WIDOW BEGINS HER STORY, HOW JOHN STALLIBRASS BECAME CAPTAIN OF THE "DEUCALION."

"My dear and honoured father, Duncan M'Leod," said Mrs. Stallibrass, commencing her story, "was a merchant of high standing and of much reputed wealth in the city of Glasgow. I may safely say that in that busy and thriving commercial centre, or indeed in all the land besides, there was no man whose character stood higher, or whose honour and integrity were more thoroughly unimpeachable, than his.

"It appears to me now, that if he had a fault at all, it consisted in a needless and feverish anxiety to maintain his character, and to keep his good name and his fair fame utterly untarnished, of which he had a morbid and needless fear.

"To me and my brother Ronald my father was always good and tender, though never foolishly indulgent. My mother died in my earliest childhood, and it seemed as though my father laid himself out to be father and mother both to the two orphan children whom she had so early left behind. So it came to pass that Ronald and I loved him with a double love, and revered and honoured him more than any words of mine can tell.

"My father was an extensive shipowner, and his

other commercial transactions were conducted on an almost equal scale. To get into the employment of his firm was always and everywhere regarded as a grand thing for any young lad, and as tantamount to a life employment with the certainty of due promotion. One of my father's ships was commanded by a young man, very young for a captain; very, very young for such a captaincy as that, whose name was John Stallibrass, a broad-built, good-tempered, bluff mannered Englishman.

"When he was quite a lad he was brought to my father by the clergyman of the parish in which he resided, who desired to get the boy a berth in such a firm as ours. It appeared that John had been deprived of his father at a very early age, and according to the minister's testimony, the lad's small hands had earned bread for the support of himself and his mother, of whom he was the only stay. My father was taken with the frank, open, intelligent face of the boy, and said to the clergyman, in his usual courteous and somewhat stately way—

"'Be good enough, my dear sir, to ask this boy's mother to come to me; I must have an interview with her before I can decide.'

"My father noticed that when the lad heard this quite a bright flash lighted up his face, as if he had said to himself, 'My mother, eh? Then I'm safe.' That index to his mind, that quiet confidence that he had a good case, settled the question, I think, before the mother came. In due time a comely and respectable widow woman, dressed in quiet black, and with more silver in her hair than her years accounted for,

was shown up to the office, and introduced into my father's private room. He turned to look at her.

"'If you please, sir,' said she, 'I am the mother of John Stallibrass.'

"She said it with much the same quiet and dignified self-gratulation and consciousness of wealth as if she had been saying, 'Sir, I am the owner of the city of Glasgow.'

"'So I see, madam; the boy carries your portrait in his face. Well, now, is he a *good* boy? Since his father's death, have you not found him wayward, difficult to manage?'

"The dear woman, while my father was speaking, had put her veil clear back from her face, her eyes were opened wide, and the eyebrows arched as with surprise. There was a suspicious redness about them and a quiver on her lip as she said—

"'What, my boy?'

"That was all; but in such a tone, with such an inflection, and accompanied by such a look, that it held a volume. My father used to say afterwards that he never felt so ashamed of himself, or so astounded at his own audacity.

"'Ha, ha, excuse my little joke, ma'am,' said my father, blushing like a schoolboy, and anxious to beat a retreat with some degree of grace. 'I thought I should like to tell you that I have decided to take the lad. I have no doubt he will do well.'

"'Thank you, sir,' said the widow; 'I have no doubt either. I am very grateful to you, sir, for giving him a chance; but I may be pardoned for saying that you are winning a prize, sir, for my John carries the bless

ing with him that God aye gives to the boy who is good to his mother. And my boy'——

"But the widow was not capable of enlarging further on that subject for reasons.

"'God bless you, madam. Good morning, I will do the best I can for John. Good morning,' and so saying, my father bowed the widow to the door, and saved his self-control.

"John Stallibrass continued even as he began; he won more and more upon my father's sympathy and regard. His natural abilities were far beyond the common, and his perseverance and determination, together with his tact and principle, made promotion not only sure but speedy. My father spared neither pains nor favour in assisting him to climb the ladder. With John's growing earnings his mother's comforts grew. Amongst the earliest recollections I have of John Stallibrass are those which recall the picture of the youth and his mother on the way to the church, or seated side by side in their customary pew; and though I was but a child, I noted with admiring interest the evident love and devotion which made it a joy to him to be near her and to anticipate her slightest wish. As for the widow herself, love, gratitude, motherly pride, sat on every feature of her comely face.

"It was a matter of intense satisfaction to my father when, after passing through all the grades of office on board ship, John passed his last examination and received a master's certificate. He deemed him perfectly competent to take the command of a large merchantman which he had just built, called the

Deucalion, which was to sail between the port of Leith and the Southern Seas.

"It was a proud day for old Mrs. Stallibrass when my father gave a dinner on board the *Deucalion* in celebration of her son's appointment. He pleasantly introduced the new commander to her as 'Captain Stallibrass,' and the dear old lady, amid smiles and tears, was greeted with the warm applause of the assembled guests when she kissed her boy before them all, and said—

"'I am a proud and grateful mother this day, Mr. M'Leod; most proud and most grateful to know that my boy, now called Captain Stallibrass, has won two other and better names. *I* call him my "heart's delight," everybody calls him "Honest John."'

"I was little more than a child when John Stallibrass, as captain of the *Deucalion,* first began to be a welcome visitor to my father's house. His visits were very frequent when his ship was in port, for my father found in him a well-informed agent, a skilful adviser, a faithful confidant and friend. On many occasions when bad trade, sudden panic, or successive losses made my father worried and anxious, and when he was threatened with almost fatal loss, John's clear head, sound judgment, and prompt action unravelled the tangled skein and averted the impending blow.

"Though I was scarcely yet in my teens, I learned to look for John's home-coming with the most delightful anticipations. He had always some little curiosity from foreign lands to give to 'little Miss Maggie,' as he called me, though even then the delight of welcoming himself was greater than that produced by any

gift that he could bring. He had always a free-hearted, free-handed, winsome way with him, and, what weighed very much with me, he always thought it worth his while to converse with the 'little lassie' in such a way as to impart useful information, and to help to lift me somewhat to his own level. My brother Ronald used to declare, with something of jealousy in his tones, that Honest John seemed to be more to me than my own brother; and would joke with me about the probability of John's running away with me, and making me his 'wee, wee wife.'

"As time passed by, and my teens were come, Honest John was a rough-mannered, warm-hearted, and confirmed bachelor. I made him sing his merry, rollicking sea songs while I accompanied him on the piano. With the greatest docility he would obey my imperious commands to tell me all that he could remember of what he had seen and heard during his latest voyage. This was my delight. No book of travel, however brightly written, or however good in quality, could have better instructed me, or so thoroughly interested me as those graphic narrations of his own doings, those fresh and thrilling details of his own observations and experiences on land and sea."

The widow then proceeded to narrate one such incident in the life of her noble husband, and as it has so much to do with the sequel of this strange history, and is of itself so full of interest, it must have a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WIDOW'S STORY CONTINUED. JOHN STALLIBRASS SHOWS HIS METTLE.

"On one occasion," said Mrs. Stallibrass, continuing her story, "Honest John aroused my interest to the utmost pitch by a wonderful story of rescue upon the high seas, which, as he put it, had come under his own observation, and which, better than any testimony of mine, will give you a true idea of my noble husband, and show you what manner of man he was.

"There was on board the *Deucalion* an ordinary A.B. sailor of the name of Alexander Muir. He was a tall, muscular, strong-limbed Scotchman, hailing from some seaside village near Inverness. He was a man of much ability in his line of life; but he had been given to drink, and under its fatal influence he had become sour, morose, and at times was guilty of outbreaks of passionate self-will.

"On one occasion, and it was by no means an unusual occurrence, this man was grossly disobedient and disrespectful to a superior officer, who had to rebuke him sharply for his misconduct, and who threatened him with severe punishment. Instead of accepting this in a proper and submissive spirit, Muir grumbled a rude and reckless answer, and turned away with a scowl that seemed to meditate further rebellion and revenge.

"A few days after the same officer caught Sandy Muir doing the same thing for which he had been rebuked before. Again he was smartly rated, and was told that this time the threatened punishment should certainly take effect.

"'You shall be put in irons!' said the angry officer.

"'Never!' shouted the sailor with an oath. He was in a perfect passion of ungovernable rage. He suddenly put his hand to his side, and then immediately struck the officer with all his force upon the breast. The officer felt that he was wounded, and at the same moment he saw the gleam of a knife-blade in the sailor's hand. He sprang forward to seize him, when Muir, who saw the probable fate in store for him, leaped upon the bulwark of the ship, and sprang from thence into the sea!

"'Man overboard!' shouted the officer instantly, and flung out a life-buoy to the reckless would-be suicide. Then flinging down his hat and stripping off his jacket, he dived after the victim of his own bad passions, determined to save him if he could.

"It was a most daring deed. The sea was rough, the ship was moving through the waves, and there seemed little hope of saving either of them from an ocean grave. In another moment a boat was lowered, for everything was always kept trim and ready on John's vessel. A crew of strong men pulled hard toward the spot, and the ship was rounded to as much as possible to wait the result.

"'There he is!' said the leader of the crew, who was the second mate, and they saw the brave officer with the life-buoy round him, holding the drowning

sailor with one hand, while with the other he strove to lessen the distance between them and the ship.

"'Let me drown, I tell you!' said Sandy Muir. 'I'm better dead than living! If you save me you'll put me in irons. Let me drop to the bottom like a stone!'

"'No, Muir,' said the officer. 'Fling your knife into the sea,' for the man had sheathed it in his belt. 'Keep your tongue still about it. I'll save you, that you may live and be a better man!'

"By this time the boat had reached them. The crew, with whom the officer was a special favourite, set up a cheer that brought an answering cheer from the distant ship. The two men were speedily pulled into the boat, where they lay silent and exhausted, and in a little while were safely hauled on board the ship.

"The officer, not greatly the worse for his adventure, retired at once to his cabin to examine his wound. It was not deep, the knife had been stopped in its deadly course by the rib, or it would have been a death-wound without doubt. His sudden plunge into the sea had stopped the flow of blood, and it was not long before the needful dressing had been applied, and he was able to go on deck again to receive the hearty congratulations alike of passengers and crew.

"Some time afterwards he went aft to inquire after Sandy Muir. That worthy was a good deal spent and weakened, the effects of unbridled passion and his long struggle in the sea. He lay in his bunk exhausted. The officer quietly approached him.

"'Well, Sandy, my lad, how do you feel now?' he asked.

"The man rose up on his bed, a cured demoniac if ever there was one, clothed and in his right mind. He took the officer's hand. His own trembled with excitement, as he replied—

"'Saved, sir, saved! body and soul! Thanks, thanks to you! To *you!* you whom I meant to kill, for murder was in my heart and in my hand. Sir!' he gasped in a hoarse and broken voice, 'I could lick your feet like a dog! and like a dog I'll follow you to the world's end!'

"Then turning his back he laid himself down again in his bunk, buried his head under the blanket, and shook as with the ague, with sobs that would not be restrained.

"'I tell you, Miss Maggie,' said John Stallibrass when he came to this point in his story, 'I tell you, Miss Maggie, as I stood by his bed my own eyes—I—I—I mean the officer's eyes'——

"'O John Stallibrass!' I said, fairly stricken with surprise. I left my seat and stood before him. I seized his two big, honest hands in mine, and half-choked with a holy love and reverence, I said—

"'That officer was YOU!' and bending down I kissed the hand of my noble, noble hero, and hurriedly left the room to ease my full heart with tears."

Here at this point the young widow was compelled to pause. What wonder that her lips quivered! What wonder that her voice failed her! What wonder that before such a flood of holy memories



"The widow's stirring narrative soon made us oblivious to the storm."—*Page* 54.

she should bow her head upon her hands and indulge in the luxury of grief?

As for Ziah Quayle, the old sailor was just then a picture for a painter. For some time he had sat with one hand holding his swart chin between finger and thumb; in the other hand his long clay-pipe was held upright with the bowl upon his knee,—he had long ago forgotten to put it in his mouth,—and with parted lips and widely opened eyes, he sat with wonder stamped on every feature. When the episode concerning Sandy Muir was ended, he still remained transfixed, enchained, absorbed; and when at last the widow's prolonged silence called him to himself again, he turned dazed eyes to me, and said softly—

"Grand John Stallibrass! What a skipper for a tar to touch his hat to!"

Then the old sailor's eye caught sight of a portrait of the captain which hung framed and glazed on the opposite side of the room. He laid down his pipe, rose from his chair, slowly and deliberately placed his glazed hat upon his head, and then standing before the portrait, reverently uncovered, bowed his grey head thrice before it, and repeated the words in an impressive whisper—

"GRAND JOHN STALLIBRASS!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE WIDOW'S STORY CONTINUED. HOW DUNCAN M'LEOD WAS THREATENED WITH DISASTER.

It was some time before the widow was able to resume her story. The surge of feeling caused by the calling up of such touching and tender memories was not to be quieted down again without much effort. I felt constrained in sheer pity to interfere.

"Dearly as I should like to hear the whole story," I said, "and deeply interested as I am in it, I beg of you, Mrs. Stallibrass, to discontinue it, at least for to-night. You can resume it when you are better able to bear it."

"No, thank you," said she, "I am better now. I would rather proceed. It is really a comfort and refreshment to talk of John to such sympathetic listeners."

"Go on, ma'am, if you please," said Ziah Quayle, "I feel just as if I had been listening to a chapter out of the Bible."

Mrs. Stallibrass understood and appreciated the old tar's transparent and suggestive testimony. She turned a grateful smile on him and proceeded with her story.

"In the dreadful year of 18—, dreadful, I mean, for all who were engaged in the shipping trade, or were involved in large commercial speculations, I noticed a

sad change in my dear and honoured father. For some previous years trade had been so bad that serious losses occurred, and many of them had shaken the firm of M'Leod & Co. to its very base. Now matters were much worse. It only needed a look at my father's bending shoulders, haggard face, and quickly whitening hair, to know that a crisis was at hand.

"Losses, disappointments, dishonesties, and delays drew an iron band around him. Banks were breaking on every side, bills were being dishonoured, and the markets were glutted with unsaleable commodities. It became clear to my father's nervously sensitive mind that he too must sink with the rest, that his firm would soon fail to meet its engagements, that the honoured name of M'Leod would have to figure in the list, the long list of bankrupts that appeared weekly in the 'Gazette.'

"'It will kill me!' he said, 'it will kill me outright!' And if it had come to be so, I believe it would.

"Of course I knew nothing of business, and could not understand why a merchant with so many ships and warehouses, and such large stocks of produce, should be cramped and harassed as much as the poorest tradesman. But I could not fail to read the soul-sickness that was written on my father's face, the agony that sat always on his brow. My young heart was sad almost to breaking, my father had neither time nor tone of mind to think of me, and so I used to wander through our large and silent house like an unquiet ghost.

"Then my father and my brother Ronald were

closeted together for hours in my father's private parlour. Even Ronnie's indomitable spirit gave way at last under the growing load of trouble, the unbroken succession of bad news that each day's post produced. I would often waylay Ronald in the passages, and ask him in stifled whispers what the matter was; but I got brief, evasive answers, and accompanied always, as I thought, with a look of pity and of pain.

"At length dear Ronald was bidden by my father to write the fatal letter which should call his creditors together, and impart to them the damning and fatal news that the end had come, and that the firm of Duncan M'Leod had gone down into the deep.

"'It's all over,' said my father wearily, 'I can do no more. Hercules himself could not carry this load; Solomon could not find his way out of this wood. I can but give up all we have,' he moaned with a bitter sigh. 'Yes, all! all! Ronald, even to a thread and a shoelatchet! God help us, my dear son! At anyrate, we will do right!'

"On his way to the little library which Ronald had fitted up for himself, and in which he was about to draft the fatal letter which meant ruin and misery untold, my brother had to pass through the room in which I was sitting. I heard him heave a deep, distressful sigh.

"'O Ronald, dear Ronald!' I said, 'what *is* the matter? What is it? Tell me all.'

"'Maggie, my darling sister,' he said, 'you ought to know. Alas, you soon must know. Better that you should hear it from my lips than from others. I am just going to draft a letter to our creditors to

announce to them the total collapse and failure of our firm. Father says he will not go on any longer. Things can only go from bad to worse, and to involve ourselves further would be a sin against both God and man!'

"'But what will come of it, Ronald?' I said. 'I don't understand'——

"'No, poor child, how should you?' said my brother, laying his dear hand on my head. 'It means ruin. It means poverty. It means the loss of all, even of a shelter and a home. For my father, Maggie, is not the man to retain, even if his creditors were willing, anything that he cannot honestly and honourably call his own. His notions of honesty and honour leave no loophole for escape. To me it matters little. I can earn my bread, I hope, with these hands. But for my honoured father, for my sweet sister, it means —Oh, my God! is there no escape?'

"Here his voice failed him, his eyes were red with a rush of tears that might not fall, and pressing his lips to my brow, he passed swiftly through the room, entered his little studio, and locked the door.

"As for me, I was dazed, stunned, bereft for a few moments of the power to think or even move. Then I flung myself upon the sofa, buried my face in the cushion, and sobbed and wept as if my heart would break. It was not for myself, God knows. I never thought of myself for a moment. But the thought of my father, my one parent who had been precious and loving as both, to think of his grey hairs bending to the grave with such a sorrow, gave me a heartache too great to tell.

"Relieved by my tears, I began to pray, and oh, Uncle Ralph! oh, dear good Ziah! I *did* pray; and the only sentence that left my lips was, 'O God, help my father! Help my father, or he will die!'

"Shame on me, dear friends, that in my after and more enduring trouble I forgot to do the same thing, for surely never poor girl in the world felt such strength and comfort as did I while yet my sore sad heart was talking with God.

"'Can I do nothing?' said I, 'nothing at all? I will go to my father and weep with him; but oh that I could help him! If I might, I could die for that.'

"A tap at the door brought me to my feet again. I hastily wiped my eyes and smoothed my ruffled hair, and then the servant entered with the letters which had come by the evening's post. With these was the evening paper. What was it, I wonder, that led me, so contrary to my usual custom, to take up the newspaper before I looked to see if there were any letters for me? I turned to the shipping news, and there the good God had surely written for me to read—

"'*London arrivals.—The Deucalion, Captain Stallibrass, from the South Seas.*'

"I gave a little cry of joy. I flew to the door of Ronald's study and tapped nervously, and, I daresay, loudly. My brother opened the door with a look of alarm on his face. How well I remember all this! Poor fellow! He was prepared for the fall of any thunderbolt just then.

"'O Ronald!' said I, 'the *Deucalion's* arrived in London! Look! Read! Before you write that

terrible letter, send for John Stallibrass. I feel, I know, he will tell us what is best to do.'

"I was thankful to God to see the sad cloud lift from Ronnie's brow. He drew his hand across his eyes, I knew they were tears of relief, as he said—

"'Right, Maggie, right! God bless you for the news. Even if things come to the worst, our father will be better and stronger for having that true Briton by his side. I have not been able to write a line. It seems as though my fingers refuse to pen the fatal sentences. Who knows what may happen? John Stallibrass is a brother born for adversity.'

"Back went Ronald with a new hope at his heart, and wrote—

"'*Come at once. Important business. Father in trouble. I write without his knowledge. Sister Maggie and I have need of you.*'

"In a few moments we knew that the letter was in time for the mail to the South, and that in a few more hours Honest John Stallibrass would be speeding to our side.

"God bless him! A request from the young and foolish Maggie would have brought the bluff, bronzed, big-hearted sailor from the ends of the earth, as I came in due time more fully to understand."

Here again there was an enforced pause. Her voice would not answer at call. A few tears, sweet tears of relief, made their way down her fair and still youthful cheeks, and might not be restrained.

As well as I could see for the dimness that would interfere with my own vision, Ziah Quayle was listening in much the same attitude as before. Again he

was brought back to a consciousness of his surroundings by the subsequent interval of silence. Then drawing his big brown hand across his honest eyes, he said—

"There, ma'am, there! I'm chokeful. If I hears any more I shall bust, there! God bless you, ma'am. What a tempestyous sea you was a-sailin' in surely! And God bless John Stallibrass for comin' to pilot the ship to harbour! and bless God for sendin' him! I'd as lieve ha' been A. B. seaman under John Stallibrass as the captain of an East Indiaman, or a rear-admiral o' the blue!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WRECK ON THE CRAIGMUIR RIDGE. ZIAH QUAYLE SAVES A SHIPWRECKED MARINER.

It was now a little after midnight, and Ziah Quayle went to the door to see "what the weather was like." Through the open door a gust of wind and rain blew in, but the storm had in some degree subsided. Turning his practised ear to seaward, Ziah listened for a few moments, and then said—

"There's an awful sea running. The wind's gone down a bit, but the swell's something tremendyous. God keep poor souls at sea atween this an' daylight, an' keep 'em far enough off shore!"

The words had not long left his lips when a hissing sound was heard, and instantly a rocket rose bright and high into the storm-laden air, and right over the boiling waters of Craigmuir Ridge. This was followed by the hollow boom of a signal-gun; this again by another rocket and the burning of blue lights. We caught brief glimpses of a gallant ship labouring heavily close by those perilous peaks the Gravestones, on which many a brave mariner and many a hapless vessel had found their fate.

"Oh, my God!" said Ziah Quayle, throwing up his arms in sore dismay. "No power on earth can save her! She's right on the Rig!"

The old sailor seized his hat, tied it tightly on his head, and prepared to make his way to the foot of the Neb, which was the point most contiguous to those terrible rocks of death.

"I must go an' tell the chaps what is the best to be done," he said, knowing his own authority and weight. "Maybe we can save some poor critturs, though I don't think that any boat can live in such a sea as this."

Mrs. Stallibrass declared that she was not afraid of being alone, and urged us both to go and render what help we could. So Ziah and I hastened down the hill. We could hear the villagers moving rapidly along the narrow street, some with lanterns to guide their steps as they hastened to the scene of danger, and, alas, of death. They had all been warned, thanks to the watch that Ziah had set to keep an eye upon the Ridge. Lights, too, appeared in almost every cottage, for all alike had been aroused by the signals, and all alike would gladly have done something for the poor souls who were in such awful straits.

Passing by the Fisherman's Arms, we found that snug and comfortable hostel with open doors and lighted rooms, as though the evening had only just set in.

"Who knows," said Andrew Munro as we passed, "but we may have to find bed and board for some shipwrecked folk? and it would be a sin as big as the Neb and a shame as black as the Ridge if anything were wanting at a time like this."

Arrived at the foot of the Neb we found the bonfire

lighted, and a number of boatmen vainly trying to launch a boat on the yeasty waves. Three times the attempt was made, and three times the boat capsized.

"Once again, brave boys!" shouted Ziah, and the presence of the old salt, who it was said was the "luck of Craigmuir," gave them new heart and hope. This time the boat was successfully launched, and once over the line of breakers that fringed the shore, it soon sped into the dark. Then followed many anxious minutes. Every now and then those on shore would telegraph a question as to their safety by a loud cheer; once and again an answering cheer was brought back upon the wind. Then and again no answer came; and suspense grew half to agony for fear those lives too were lost upon the cruel Rig.

At long last the boat returned, returned after a brave but bootless fight. The ship, not a large one as it seemed, had broken to pieces and gone down. The would-be rescuers had gone as near as possible, more near than wise, (but when had true courage an overplus of wisdom?) to the Gravestone Peaks; they had sailed round and round, and shouted themselves hoarse in hope to hap on some poor wrestler with the waves. Then all was ominously still, and the drenched sailors, spent and worn by sore buffeting with the storm, came back to land. Sturdy fishermen rushed into the boiling surf to seize the boat, and amid a cheer of relief the brave band were carried high and dry ashore.

I stood looking, sad and awe-struck, as in the presence of death, at the frowning crags of the Ridge, when I was joined by Ziah Quayle.

"Gone, sir! Gone to Davy Jones, an' not one of 'em I should say, either dead or alive, can come to land. God ha' marcy on 'em, we can't."

It was a sad thought. How helpless we are in our greatest straits! How little man is in the presence of the forces of nature when they choose to spurn his bridle and defy his curb!

Still the people waited and watched, as though unwilling to give up all hope. They shouted into the dark, but there was no response; nothing, only the scream of the pitiless wind and the growl of the angry sea. Then an awful hush fell upon the little band of watchers. They felt themselves to be present at a funeral. The wind became a dirge, the voice of the sea as the moan of the bereaved, and the whole air was heavy with the gloom of death. A brave ship had gone down with its freight of living men, be they few or many; they had gone down, too, among the hungry quicksands, which whirl and swirl for ever around the iron rocks of Craigmuir Ridge.

Most of the villagers now retired from the place, and even Ziah Quayle was constrained to give up his long keen watching with a sigh. We were just turning away, he toward his little cabin, I to the cottage on the hill, when, as he cast one lingering glance on an incoming wave, he perceived some dark object floating in on its white crest.

"Lend a hand here!" shouted Ziah, and in an instant a fisherman with a strong rope firmly fastened round his waist, and held by stout hands, rushed up to the middle in the raging waters, seized the flotsam without noting what it was, and dragged it to the shore.

It was a drowned mariner, drowned outright to all seeming, a common sailor, brawny and muscular, with the lines of strong resolve still written on his lips and brow, to tell of the desperate efforts he had made to reach the shore.

By his side, on the moment of his landing, knelt Ziah Quayle; for who but he, the travelled tar, who had been everywhere and knew everything, could bring back, if back it could be brought, the ebbing tide of life? Many a time had Ziah fought with grim death under similar circumstances, and there was a skill in his treatment, and a deftness in his fashion of handling the limp and motionless body, that could scarcely have been surpassed by any trained agent of the Royal Humane Society itself.

Long and laboriously did Ziah toil to restrain the fleeting life from gliding clean away. His tender and manly heart was in the business, and all his wit and all his skill were brought to bear to cheat the grim destroyer of this one victim; but not one sign, however feeble, was vouchsafed to cheer him in his vain endeavour.

"Let him alone, Ziah," said a bystander. "All the poor fellow wants now is a coffin and a decent grave. What a fine-built fellow he is, surely?"

"He *must* live!" said Ziah, earnestly resuming his difficult and seemingly impossible task. "I can't feel, somehow, as though I was handling a dead man. God help us! He *must* live, I tell you!"

Scarcely had he spoken when, as some one held a flaming faggot to the pallid face, Ziah saw the eyelids quiver, saw, too, a faint twitching of the lips.

"He lives!" cried the excited tar in the true tone and spirit of a good Samaritan, and he redoubled his exertions.

A fluttering sigh or two came through the man's white lips, which instantly reddened, as though the laggard heart was just beginning to do its office once again, and Ziah felt that his words were to be confirmed after all. A little brandy was forced between his set teeth, and further signs of life immediately appeared.

Carefully wrapped in a blanket, which, like all other needful things for such an emergency, was in readiness close by, the sailor was carried by six strong men on linked hands as tenderly as any babe was ever carried with its mother's arms around it. Ziah walked by his side as a victor might whose spoils were being brought from the battle-field, and timber-toe did never prod the ground with greater dignity and self-composure than on that long-to-be-remembered night.

"Shall we take him to Andrew Munro's?" asked one of the bearers.

"Nay, nay," quoth Ziah Quayle. "I feel somehow as though he belongs to me. He'll want a parlous deal o' nursing yet, I'se afeared, to bring him safely round. Carry him to the cabin, lads. He'll get it there. He's bound to live. I feel it, though why I should feel so sartain I can hardly tell."

"Ay, ay!" said his willing comrades, pursuing their steady way carefully and quietly. If the poor fellow is to have a chance o' life, the cabin's as good an' better than a hospital, an' Ziah Quayle's as good

an' better for this sort o' work than any doctor of 'em all."

By and by the rescued sailor was laid on Ziah's own bed, and that true, kind heart was filled with quiet gladness, that his lowly roof was honoured, by the Great Master of all the charities, in being chosen as the home and haven of a brother in such sore distress.

It was well indeed for the poor waif, cast up from the cruel sea, that in his desperate straits of weakness and exhaustion, he was favoured with the skilful nursing, the tender care, and the warm sympathy of Ziah Quayle.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WIDOW'S STORY CONTINUED. HOW THE FIRM OF M'LEOD AND CO. WAS SAVED.

On the evening of the following day, and during that pleasant interval between light and dark, which has been well called the Children's Hour, the familiar step of Ziah Quayle was heard on the gravel walk outside the cottage. As usual, the children recognised it instantly, and at once bounded off to greet their favourite.

"Avast there, you pirates!" cried Ziah, prodding timber-toe in the gravel by way of a mainstay, and holding forth his hands as though afraid of being run down, and with a ludicrous simulation of terror in his face. "Sheer off, you buccaneers! or there'll be a collision on the high seas, an' down you go like a frigate with a seventy pounder through her keel, an' no coroner's quest to give a vardict, you young shavers. I really think you can hear old dot-an'-carry-one before he rounds the headland and sails in at the garden gate."

For half an hour the two pirates held him captive, and were then dismissed to their repose, a repose all the sweeter and sounder, I fancy, for the tussles and the laughter which the old tar enjoyed as much as they.

Then the widow trimmed her lamp and brought out

her needlework. Ziah was located in the chimney corner with the pipe laid ready for action by his side. I ensconced myself on the opposite side, drawing the sofa to the fire to make the circle cosier. It was quite clear that all parties were preparing for the resumption of the widow's story. Ziah was able to report favourably of his guest. He had revived more rapidly than his host and doctor had expected, and was left seated in comfort by the cabin fire, with all he needed within reach. He had urged his generous host to leave him a little for change and fresh air; and Ziah, knowing no harm would come of it, was glad, as he put it, to "come and hear something more about the prince o' skippers an' a king o' men."

"The space between London and Glasgow," said the widow, resuming her narrative, "was covered as rapidly as prompt action and an express train could do it, and within twenty-four hours John Stallibrass was in close converse with my brother and myself in the little study, on the table of which lay the sheet of paper for the letter which Ronald's fingers refused to write.

"In a little while the whole sad story was told, and to this day I can remember how John's tender grey eyes were fixed on me the while, as though to note how I bore up beneath the blow. He professed to think that things were really not so bad as they seemed.

"'Heart up, Ronald! heart up! dear laddie,' he said, laying his broad hand kindly on his shoulder, for he saw how deeply my brother felt the strain. 'The firm of M'Leod & Co. is a ship that has weathered

many a storm before, and she'll weather this as sure as my name's John. Her timbers are sound; not a rotten plank in the whole craft from stem to stern. She has been knocked about a bit by rough weather, or strained her timbers by getting into shallow water so as to spring a leak or two; but she isn't on the rocks, an' there's only a few feet of water in the hold. All hands to the pump, comrade! I'll be bound we'll float her into deep water again, and she'll ride the waves as proudly as she ever did, with the flag of good success flying at her peak!'

"Then, turning to me, he said with a strange softness in his tones—

"'Miss Maggie, try to carry a light heart. If it please God, we'll soon have your father bright and lively again. Never fear! Duncan M'Leod's too good to sink. God bless him! I love and honour him more than any man under heaven, and he will live and die in peace and honour, or John Stallibrass is the greatest ingrate under the sun! Believe me, Miss Maggie, I ask you to believe me, when I say that the clouds will break and let down the sunshine by and by. Good-night; I'll be at the office in the morning.'

"Straightway, and without shaking hands or a backward look, John took his big heart out of the room, or he would verily have broken down.

"'God bless him!' said Ronald. 'His face and words are as refreshing as a breeze from heaven. There is hope yet!'

"'Hope everything!' I said, for I at anyrate believed in him without a question or a doubt.

"The next morning, as my father sat in his private

office before a big balance sheet which he had drawn out, as he said, to show his creditors 'the worst,' he was surprised to see the captain enter and to hear his usual bluff and hearty greeting.

"'Good morning, sir. I have the honour and the pleasure to report the *Deucalion* safe in port after a good and successful voyage. You'll realise a good thing this venture.'

"Even while he spoke he was shocked and saddened to see the change which in a few short months had been wrought in my father's personal appearance. Without beating further about the bush, he said—

"'Mr. M'Leod, you are killing yourself either with work or worry, or both. You must positively clear out of this for a while, and let younger and stronger men take your place. Now it seems to me, as the *Deucalion* requires some repairs, and as there seems to be precious little work, fetching and carrying over sea in these hard times, I might be better employed in helping Ronald here, while you and Miss Maggie go away for a good spell of rest.'

"To all this my father only shook his head, and straightway told honest John plainly how matters stood.

"'The fact is, Captain Stallibrass, the firm cannot nearly meet its responsibilities. I cannot be a party to any kind of compromise. If I could see the slightest hope of retrieving our position, I would hold on a little longer. But I do not, and the sooner we save what there is for those to whom it legitimately belongs, the more honest I shall feel. I shall give up every stick and pin that I possess; and if the sale of my body into bondage for a lifetime could enable me to stand clear

and free of all with unshaken credit and clean hands, I would willingly live and die a slave!'

"Here my father's voice faltered and failed him; and flinging his arms upon the desk before him, he laid his white head on them and wept.

"Honest John Stallibrass was as bold as a lion and as brave as a Spartan, but this was more than he could stand. For some moments he stood biting his lips, while his face reddened with suppressed emotion. If the bondage of John Stallibrass could have availed to end these awful straits which were bringing my father's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave, how willingly would Honest John have thrust his hands into the chains there and then.

"'As for clean hands, Mr. M'Leod,' he said at last, 'come what will, yours are spotless; and as for credit,—tell me has anybody doubted or even tested it?'

"'Not yet,' said my father huskily, 'not just yet.'

"'No, and never will. I'll stake my life on it,' said John, with the fervour begotten of strong conviction.

"Strange to say, forthwith the spell, the charm which my noble husband always carried with him, began to work. He succeeded in inducing my father to give him and Ronald control of his affairs, and to go away a little for the rest he so much needed.

"'At any rate,' said John, 'we can be getting matters ship-shape for sinking gracefully; though I mean, by God's help, that the good ship M'Leod & Co. shall ride proudly into port.'

"My father and I were summarily packed off into the Highlands, with the express understanding, that

if on our part we would not come back until we were sent for, Ronald and John on their part would keep us thoroughly posted up with the daily current of affairs. I knew full well, however, that no ill news that could possibly be kept back would be permitted to trouble us in our Highland home, so that my father might gain vigour and health again.

"In the private letters which were written to me by Ronald, all references to John Stallibrass were couched in terms of warmest admiration. It was evident that the writer had a growing faith and confidence, and a deepening reverence, for that true and faithful friend in need. And no wonder!

"John set to work to realise every kind of goods and property belonging the firm which could be spared without impairing the efficiency of its machinery, or bringing a suspicion upon its solvency. But I need not weary you by these details. They are all written on my heart for ever. It is enough to say that his skill and energy, his bold, brave, indomitable spirit, were so brought to bear, that he raised the huge carcass which had practically foundered in the deep, and put her once more in trim for a prosperous course.

"I must, however, tell you of one of the means he used to bring about this happy result. But first let us have a little supper, or I am afraid you will weary of my story."

I need scarcely say that both I and Ziah deprecated that suggestion. As for Ziah Quayle, that honest tar was fascinated by such a picture of a sailor, and as soon as he had found his voice, he said—

"An' just to think of it, he was a sailor! What a skipper to sarve under! Give me such a captain as that an' I'd ship again to-morrow, grey head, wooden leg, an' all, either for the North Pole or the Cannibal Islands. Go on, ma'am. Never mind supper. This here's rations good enough for anybody an plenty of 'em."

Mrs. Stallibrass was much pleased with Ziah's honest show of interest, but was not to be diverted from her hospitable design.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WIDOW'S STORY CONTINUED. HOW JOHN STALLIBRASS WON RONALD M'LEOD A WIFE.

"It appears that during a previous voyage," said Mrs. Stallibrass after supper, "a certain clever speculator who was a passenger on board the *Deucalion* had offered some brilliant inducements to John Stallibrass to leave my father's employment, with a view to accomplish a trading venture which would rapidly bring a large fortune to them both. The plan was very feasible, the scheme was sound, and John felt confident that with his special knowledge he could win a grand financial windfall, such as would line his coffers with gold for a lifetime. But two things were in the way of Honest John. First, it would necessitate his leaving the service of his old friend and benefactor; and in the second place, it must inevitably injure, and that seriously, the operations of my father's firm. And so John had but one answer, and that was 'No,' promptly given and resolutely kept to, in spite of golden promises of profit and reward.

"One day while John was turning over the pages of a commercial paper, he came upon a statement concerning the very article which had offered so rich a harvest.

"'Ronald!' said he, jumping from his chair and

startling his companion, 'we must get the *Deucalion* ready for sea at once! I'm off to the China seas!' and straightway he told him the whole case.

"In a little while the voyage was made, the transaction completed. Certain valuable preferences were gained for M'Leod & Co., and enormous profits accrued. Shall I ever, ever, ever forget the day when the morning letters came to our Highland home, bringing my father this glad news. With a radiant face my father handed one letter to me, saying—

"'Thank God, Maggie, darling. M'Leod & Co. lives, is strong, and the name, kept bright and fair through many a generation, is still without a stain! Thank God, and John Stallibrass!'

"Oh, it was touching to see the change in him. He went in and out of our little Highland cottage with a step so light and buoyant that I could but weep with joy to look at him. As we sauntered beneath the shadow of the mountains and by the rippling burns, he would sing snatches of old familiar songs, a thing I had not known him do for many a weary month; and every now and then he would pause and say—

"'Grand John Stallibrass! Thank God! thank God!'

"We returned home, and on the morning following our arrival my father met John at the office.

"'John Stallibrass!' said he, as he seized his big brown hand and held it in both his own, and bowed his white head before him as in reverence of such a friend, 'God ever bless you, good and faithful servant,

true-hearted friend in need. As I think of my fair fame preserved, my good name saved, my children's heritage free from cloud or stain, I could say with aged Simeon, "Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."'

"When John Stallibrass saw me after our return from the Highlands he looked at me with surprise, and, as I was quick to detect, with a certain change in his face and greeting.

"'Why, Miss Maggie,' said he, 'what have the Highlands been doing to you? You went away a child, you return a woman! The magic air of those upper regions has charmed you into'——

"I suppose I looked at him with great surprise. I know I blushed up to the roots of my hair. I was wanting, as in the olden time, to take him by the hand and kiss it, and tell him freely all my love and gratitude; but it could not be in the face of his strange tokens of surprise, and especially of the new and coldly courteous mode of his address. I suppose he saw my discomposure, for he cut short the compliment that was on his lips, and turned it aside with some commonplace words of welcome.

"Oh, how miserable I was! and how I misread him!

"Nothing would do for my father but a speedy retirement from business. He felt that at his age his strength and energy was not likely again to be equal to the management of such a large concern. He offered John Stallibrass a partnership; but the sailor would not leave the sea, and besides, he said, he had no love for that line of life, which made his self-denying

toil and effort sublimer still. Ronald's sympathies and likings were all for art, in which, as an amateur, he had gained marked proficiency, and he longed to make it his profession. So my father realised what property he possessed and sold his business. Ronald gave himself up to the easel, the palette, and the pencil, and we retired to a small but pleasant and attractive villa on the banks of the Clyde.

"Captain Stallibrass purchased the *Deucalion* on favourable terms, and so became owner as well as commander of his favourite ship. His visits were as constant as circumstances would permit, and his presence was always more welcome to my father than flowers in May.

"To me, from the day of our return from the Highlands, he had grown wondrously respectful, and was even cold and distant in his manner, though he seemed to be as willing as ever to come and go at my beck and call. Once or twice I felt constrained to ask him if I had grieved him in any way, as his old freedom and sociability were gone. His bluff, honest face was blush-covered like a school girl's as he stammered—

"'No, Miss Maggie, never. I could never be grieved with you, or grieve you.' And then he would take the first opportunity to leave my side.

"As for me, I may say now that at that time John Stallibrass was in my view a king among his kind, my ideal of a hero, a Christian, and a man.

"During our residence on the banks of the Clyde another important event transpired in which John Stallibrass showed of what mettle he was made. In the days of our prosperity, Ronald, with the full consent of

all parties, was engaged to a dear sweet girl, the daughter of the provost of a neighbouring town. The tie that bound the young folks was that of genuine and true affection, and under the influence of Agnes Baird, Ronald had risen to a fresher, higher, nobler estimate of life.

"With the decline of my father's health, the transfer of his business, and our retirement to a small country home, the warmth of Provost Baird's approval of his daughter's choice cooled greatly. When it was discovered that Ronald's future calling was to be that of an artist, or 'painter fellow,' as the Provost contemptuously described it, he roundly declared that he would have no beggarly knight of the palette for a son-in-law. He gave Agnes to understand that she must unhook her affections somehow and transfer them to a more acceptable and eligible party.

"Poor Agnes! She had not the power to deal with her love in that off-hand fashion. It was not a garment to be taken off and put on at pleasure. It had got hold of her heart, and was not likely to be loosened but with her life.

"Mrs. Baird, whose forbears, one of them at least, had worn a title, and whose version of respectability was 'plenty o' siller,' joined with her husband in forbidding Agnes thus to throw herself away. At last the persecution became so severe, and met with so little response on the part of the faithful girl, that Ronald was himself appealed to to cut the knot by resigning the maiden; and all was said that mean souls can say to rouse his spirit and lead him to cast off them and theirs in wounded pride.

"So Agnes' health failed, and she was sent away after the roses had left her cheeks and the light had gone from her eye. Then a report came to Ronald that she was ill and like to die. He suffered fearfully in health and spirits; and although he was already making his mark as an artist, he seemed to lose all heart, and his condition filled us with alarm.

"Captain Stallibrass discovered the secret trouble. Probably my father had told him, for he told him everything. In his own winsome way he gained from Ronald all the confidence he required, and in his usual quietly unassuming way, he said—

"'Bide a wee, laddie, bide a wee! Allan Baird can't do everything, though he is the Provost of Dundee.'

"He had a long interview with the father of Agnes. He spoke highly and truly of Ronald's artistic genius. He predicted for him a great and even a wealthy future. And when he proceeded to draw a picture of Agnes' feeble health and the possibility of a fatal result, the Provost began to give way. He promised Mrs. Baird that her portrait was sure to find its way to the walls of the Academy, painted by her clever son-in-law, of whom all Scotland would by and by be proud. The final victory perhaps was won by his statement to the effect that Mr. M'Leod was in a position to leave a store of gold behind him, that he himself was a 'warm man,' and that Ronald and Maggie M'Leod would inherit all he had, and, said he, 'that, I think, may satisfy even the Provost of Dundee.'

"At an evening party somebody whispered to Ronald that Agnes Baird was better, and had 'become

engaged.' Poor Ronald retired into a little ante-room to eat that bitter morsel alone. As he stood there, that young lady glided in on noiseless feet, showed a smiling face before him, and said—

"'If you please, John Stallibrass has sent me with his compliments.'

"I need not say what followed, except that in reply to Ronald's foolish inquiry about her becoming engaged, she said—

"'Why, don't you see, silly boy, I engaged to meet you here. Captain Stallibrass made me promise; and Ronald, dear, I would engage to do a good deal more than that for him, and you need not be jealous either.'

"'Jealous! no,' said Ronald, happy and content, 'for even if it were possible for my darling to play me false, John Stallibrass could not do it. God bless him! Sooner should I expect the sun to darken or the heavens fall.'

"To-day my dear brother and his sweet wife live happily together in their little artistic home, 'The Hermitage,' beneath the shadow of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, and to them John Stallibrass' name and memory are fragrant as precious ointment to this hour."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WIDOW'S STORY CONCLUDED. HOW JOHN STALLIBRASS WON A WIFE FOR HIMSELF.

"At last there came upon us a grievous trouble. My dear and honoured father, who had never quite regained his strength since those dark days when wreck and ruin lay before him, began rapidly to fail. An attack of paralysis hastened the process, and the end was near.

"During his last illness John Stallibrass, who gave up the prospect of a lucrative voyage to be with him, never left his side. He nursed him as tenderly as any woman could. He laid an almost constant embargo on my interference, especially when sorrow and sickness combined to rob me of my strength. At such times it seemed as though my slightest need and faintest wish were met before I had the time even if I had had the wish to speak.

"There was something thoroughly real about John Stallibrass' religion, though he seldom spoke of it. He was able in clear, consolatory words, to speak to my father on those sacred subjects concerning which the sick man had been very reticent with everybody else. John was able to obtain from him a clear, full, ever comforting testimony of his 'good hope through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"A little while before he died he said, 'John Stallibrass, best of friends and tenderest of brothers, I am gliding quickly out from all need of human help or human care, but I know whom I have believed, and I feel no fear. I am just

"Wearin' awa' to the land o' the leal."

But I want to ask you about Ronald. You will not forget Ronald, will you, John? He is passionately fond of art, and will do well in it, as I believe, but he has very little worldly wisdom, and will need a counsellor and a friend. He loves and honours you, John, more than any. Promise me that you will be a friend to Ronald.'

"'Yes, that I will, till I die, dear friend, I promise. So help me, God,' was the emphatic reply.

"'And my darling Maggie, John,' said my father, fixing his longing eyes on his faithful friend—'Maggie, the joy of my heart, the light of my home, the comfort of my life ever since I lost her sainted mother. My heart is sore for Maggie. Ronald will be settling down; he and Agnes will have a home of their own. This for the present will be Maggie's home. But she is not able, I am afraid, to bear much rough weather, John. She will want a friend. John Stallibrass, will you take care of Maggie?'

"The words were not out of his lips before John lifted his eyes to mine; and there and then I read the secret of his life. I read the explanation of all his altered ways to me, of his respectfully diffident treatment of me, of his constrained and halting speech. In every feature of his noble face, in the full deep gaze of his

flashing eyes, I read the secret of his overwhelming, all absorbing love for me! I could scarcely restrain myself from crying out, so unexpected yet clear was the revelation, and so sweet.

"'Answer me, John,' said my father, as if wondering at the pause. 'Will you take charge of Maggie?'

"Again he looked at me as if to read my very soul. He did read it, even as I had read his.

"'What shall I say, Maggie?' he whispered, and I saw the strong hand that held my father's tremble like a leaf.

"'Say "Yes," John Stallibrass,' I whispered, as I drooped my burning cheeks, while my heart half stopped its beating, for in that moment I knew that I had promised to be his wife!

"'Dear friend,' said John, leaning over the dying man, 'I *will* take charge of Maggie. I will guard and cherish her more dearly than my own life.'

"'Thank you, John,' said my father, with a sigh of relief, 'now I can die happy. God bless you, John. He will bless you, for you are always good and true.'

"Soon afterwards the end came. My father peacefully passed away, and Ronald and I were orphaned once more. By his dear dead body I knelt, my brother knelt, and between us knelt John Stallibrass, my love, my life, my king, pledged to be mine as I had vowed to be his, in answer to my father's dying prayer.

"My story, dear friends, is nearly told. My brother Ronald married Agnes Baird, and removed to Edinburgh, and there they live in peace and happiness, marred only by the bereavement and sorrow of my own life. John and I were married in a little church

near my own home. Right up to the very day on which the hero of my heart was made, by law as well as love, my own, he was ever impressing on me that he would not bind me to the vows given under the solemn circumstances of my father's death. He was afraid that I had consented to be his wife to give calm and comfort to my father's dying hours. He declared he could not credit his own happiness. He was such a rude bear, he said, that it was not likely I could love him for himself alone, and he so much older too. I stopped the expression of his doubts with kisses, and when we wrote our names together in the church register, I said—

"'Now, John Stallibrass, will you question it any more?'

"'Never, my darling, never!' he said as he held me to his heart. And he never did. Five years of happiness, perfect happiness, followed our marriage—happiness, alas, too great and too deep to last. The birth of Georgie seemed to fill the cup to overflowing; but when our darling Beatrice was born, he found that there were added drops of blessing, honey-sweet. All that was thoughtful and kind, all that could show his dear, deep love for me and his darling babes, seemed to flow out from him and round about him like an atmosphere. His voyages were invariably successful, and his profession, together with his tact for business, was winning him more than sufficiency of gold.

"Before his last voyage he had promised that the *Deucalion* should be specially refitted on his return, and that I and the children should go with him to the Southern Seas. The *Deucalion* never came to

port. As you know, she went to pieces on the Craigmuir Ridge, and my husband, my noble husband lies low beneath the cruel, cruel rocks on which his ship and my life were wrecked together.

"And now, dear friends, if I have sinned, may I not be forgiven? May I not be pardoned for saying, 'Surely there is no sorrow like unto my sorrow,' and for feeling as if light and love and life have all gone from me, and left me stranded, broken-hearted, and all but the victim of despair?

"So I have felt it. God only knows how I have striven against it for the sake of my sweet bairns. Until the other day the struggle was in vain, and I felt that I was getting worsted in the fight. But *I have seen John Stallibrass.* His spirit has been permitted to bring me a message from heaven. He points me upward, that I may have faith and hope, and meet him with my children in the home that can never be darkened by the shadow of death. He has taught me again with his own lips, that despite my sore wounds and bleeding heart, *God is good!*"

The widow's story was concluded. It had been told with great difficulty. At times it appeared that she must fail in her purpose. But in spite of tears and sobs and an almost unconquerable choking in the throat, to which certain portions of her narrative gave rise, she held on her way bravely to the end. When the end was reached she sank back exhausted in her chair, her fair and even handsome features white and wan with the trying ordeal through which she had schooled herself to pass.

Ziah Quayle had listened as before in perfect silence. Now his eyes were fixed on the widow's calm pale face, on which the lines of trouble were so strongly scored. No words can describe the expression of his own face. His weather-browned and wrinkled features were irradiated with mixed wonder, reverence, sympathy, and affection. Then the tension so tightly strung was loosened, the fountains of the great deep—and the heart of the dear old sailor *was* a great deep—were opened, and the big round tears rolled unchecked down his bronzed and furrowed cheeks.

"Ziah Quayle," said I softly, "what think you of that for the picture of a man? There is no mystery about the greatness of her sorrow now!"

The old tar stroked his grey locks from crown to forehead in an absent sort of way, as he replied—

"Grand John Stallibrass! 'cordin' to my thinkin' he was just at the top o' the tree, he was, wi' no chance o' promotion in this here world, seein' as how he *was* at the top; an' so the good Lord had to put him on the books i' the higher sarvice to give him a fair chance. I reckon he has found his proper place, somewhere i' the front ranks now, among the archangels or something o' that sort. Howsomdiver, and be that as it may, we're sartin sure that the Great Captain of all has said to him once for all through all etarnity, 'John Stallibrass, well done, well done! Thou good an' faithful sarvant, enter thou into the joy o' thy Lord!'"

Then looking again at the young widow, on whose face his apt words had brought a smile, his counten-

ance fell, an expression of respectful reverence and tender sympathy made beautiful his rugged face, as he continued—

"But, oh, sir! God help and pity her that's lost such a one as him! That's all *I* can say!"

"And so He does and will, dear Ziah," said Mrs. Stallibrass. "I feel that I am lifted up above my sorrow. John Stallibrass's widow will be loyal and submissive to her husband's God; for *God is good!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GUEST IN ZIAH QUAYLE'S CABIN RECEIVES A REVELATION.

In the course of the following day I was strolling, as my wont was, along the sandy beach in the near neighbourhood of the seaward front of the Fisherman's Arms. I saw Ziah Quayle slowly walking in the sun with a stranger clad in a sailor's suit leaning on his arm. I felt sure that this was none other than the shipwrecked seaman whom Ziah had brought back to life from out the very jaws of death the other night on the sands beneath Cragmuir Neb. I hastened toward them, and seeing that the poor fellow was ill able to walk or even stand, for all he had the strong arm of honest Ziah, I proffered my own arm to help him on the other side.

"Thank you, Maister Ralph," said Ziah, "my messmate 'll be glad of a little more help, seein' as how he's kind o' tottering on his pins yet. I tells him as how Craigmuir air an' Craigmuir mutton 'll soon give him ballast in the hold an' put wind in his sails, so as he'll be able to scud along like a yacht in half a gale. When we get to the porch o' the Fisherman's Arms, we'll put him in dock for a few minutes in Andrew Munro's bar-parlour. Then he'll be able to go on the other tack an' make for the cabin again."

But at this the poor fellow stood still, cast an imploring look on his kindly host, and said feebly but earnestly—

"No, no, not there, comrade, not there. Let me sit down on that block for a few minutes. Then we can go back again."

I suppose he noticed the look of surprise that passed over Ziah's face, for he went on to say—

"You've 'arned the right to take me where you like, old shipmate, an' to do with me what you like, but I ain't seen the inside of a grogshop for nigh on five years, an' if I may have my own way, I'll keep outside of 'em till I get to the country where never a signboard swings to play the fool with a poor Jack Tar."

The poor fellow spoke so earnestly, and looked at Ziah with a face of such pitiful entreaty, that it instantly produced the response—

"Ay, ay, comrade, there's no compulsion in these here parts. I don't know but you're in the right on't, specially like if you've been made a fool on wi' the likes o' that. Sit you down a bit, an' we'll run back to harbour when you've got your breath."

"I promised *him*," said the sailor in mournful tones, "I promised *him*, an' *him* next to my God it's my duty to obey. Nay, I needn't say next to my God, for he's been the very voice of God to me, and their voices 'll never differ to all eternity!"

He was quite overcome with the strength of his feelings, and, in his weakness, could not repress the sob that bore witness of his truth.

"All right, comrade," said Ziah soothingly, "take it easy like. When we drop anchor by the cabin fire,

you shall tell me, if you will, who '*him*' is. I reckon, if you've hit off his character i' them words o' yours, he's worth takin' notice on, an' kotowin' to, whatever he may say."

"He's a prince o' sailors an' he's a king o' men, an' when he gets to heaven, if he isn't there already, he'll be king o' angels, if so be as there is anything o' that sort up there," said the sailor, and a faint flush on either cheek, and a flash in either eye, gave emphasis to his faith in the truth of the strong assertion.

"Then he'll be the second as I've hear'd on durin' the last four-an'-twenty hours," said Ziah with a knowing look at me, "an' it's worth a struggle or two i' dyin' to get a look at 'em. 'Cordin' to my thinkin' them sort's too good for the kind o' lodgin's as they gets down here. That's the reason may be that one comes across so few of 'em. Come along, mate, this wind's beginnin' to blow a bit chilly like, an' you'll be safer in a snug port."

Again we each lent an arm to our companion, who was very feeble, and in due time arrived at the cosy quarters of Ziah Quayle. The tired guest was soon seated in his kindly host's capacious easy chair. As I sat on the rough sea-chest which, as the reader will remember, had come ashore from the wreck of the *Deucalion* and still remained in Ziah's charge, I could not help admiring the deft and skilful fashion in which Ziah prepared some hot mutton broth and brought it in a basin for the invalid to drink.

"There, my comrade! line your in'ards wi' that," said Ziah merrily. "I'll agree that'll do you better sarvice than ony kind o' swipes that you can get at

the Fisherman's Arms, though I can't deny that Andrew Munro, honest man, keeps as genuine grog as you can well get, i' these parts at any rate, though it'll take a sight o' customers to keep his doors open, if they drink no more than me."

While the rescued sailor was discussing the nourishing preparation with evident relish, I bade the pair good evening, and proceeded to my quarters at the cottage, to be in time for the evening meal. In the course of the evening, as I afterwards discovered, and when the stranger was refreshed and inclined to conversation, he inquired if anything had been picked up that was likely to have come from the ship that had been shattered on the cruel rocks of the Ridge.

"Not a splinter," said Ziah in reply. "It's a'most always so. There's a particular swirl o' the waters there, an' a particular set o' the current, an' the quicksands under the rocks is so lively like, that everything is either sucked down into the sands below, or else floated clean out to sea; not a single body has been recovered, an' of all the crew an' passengers, many or few, none have been found either alive or dead, but only you. I say, messmate, you must ha' had a hard fight of it, an', 'scuse me, but it is rather more than a miracle, a wonderful marcy o' God's providence that you are alive this night."

"Ay, ay," said the sailor, drooping his head. "Them as is worth savin' seems to be gripped by Davy Jones, so as they can't come up again; an' them like me, as isn't worth the trouble o' savin', seems as though they can't be drowned."

"Nay, nay, mate, 'cording to my thinkin' that

isn't the way to put it. God's providence knows what He's about, an' them as is saved is saved for some purpose or other, though we mayn't be able ezactly to see the run of it."

"Do you think so?" said the sailor with great earnestness. "Then I know what *I'm* saved for, at any rate, an' if so be that that's it, you've just gone an' been an' done the grandest bit o' business you ever did i' your life when you saved this worthless carcass o' mine. I shall soon be better now."

It really seemed as though the man had received some sudden inspiration, so great was the change that had come over him at the thought that he was saved for a purpose. Ziah could hardly read him, but he knew that excitement was not good for him, so he sought to direct his thoughts into another channel.

"Well, messmate," said Ziah, "I needn't tell you that I'm downright glad an' thankful to see you pickin' up your crumbs an' your sperrits again. I haven't bothered you much wi' questionin's an' such like, but if you don't mind I should like to hear something about that unlucky ship, an' about yourself, if so be as you feel that ways inclined."

"Ay, ay, shipmate, as I said afore, you have 'arned the right to do wi' me what you like, an' o' course that means that you've 'arned the right to ax me what you like, though I ha'n't much to tell about the ship."

As the sailor's story had in it the elements of strong surprise, it will be better to defer it to another chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SANDY MUIR MAKES A REVELATION TO HIS HOST WHICH ASTONISHES HIM.

"It ain't within the compass of my abilities, comrade, to tell you much about that 'ere ship," said the sailor in answer to Ziah Quayle's inquiry. "She was a decent-sized craft for a coastin' barque, for that's what she was, d'ye see, but she was a bit clumsy in her build, and didn't answer well to her helm, 'specially in such beastly weather as that which put her bones atop o' them there rocks. If she'd ha' been a bit easier to handle, ten to one but the skipper would ha' kept her i' safer quarters, for he was a tol'able navigator, and seemed to know what he was about."

"I don't know so much about that, mate," answered Ziah. "Not that I misdoubt his seamanship. There's them 'at were 'mazin' hands at managin' a vessel, an' that had a ship to manage, as kittle and kindly as ever floated on salt water, that came to grief on Craigmuir Ridge for all that. The fact is, you might think the place bewitched, for when the wind's nor'-east an' a big buster at that, an' a heavy sea on, an' a spring-tide a-runnin' in like a race-horse, as it was that night, seemin' to me no mortal man can keep his craft off the Rig if he comes within a sartin distance. But that's neither

here nor there. The mischief's done an' there's an end on't, more's the pity. What was her name?"

"*The North Star,*" replied the sailor, "plyin' atween London an' Leith, callin' generally at Hull when homeward bound. She was manned by eleven hands, all told. I was the only passenger on board, if you can go to call me one, seein' as I'd begged a passage from the Humber in return for a bit of labour. Two of the crew were on the sick list, an' so I got what I ax'd for. I was out of a berth owin' to shipwreck an' bad luck, and I wanted to have one peep more at the dear old hills o' Sutherland, where I was born, before I took ship again. This here shipwreck has put an end to all that. I shipped for Craigmuir Ridge, it seems, an' here I be. Now, as soon as I get my sea legs I'm off to the South Pacific, if so be Providence is willin'. It's strange that I was the only lucky fellow that escaped. I didn't feel as though there was anything particularly lucky in that until I heard you say as Providence spared a poor chap like me for some good purpose. I would a'most as soon gone to Davy Jones wi' the rest, only for one thing."

Here the sailor paused as if in deep thought, thought which at one and the same time saddened and perplexed him.

"An' what's that, comrade?" asked Ziah kindly.

"*Him,*" quoth the sailor solemnly and with an emphatic nod.

"Him!" said Ziah, "an' who *is* him?"

"Him as I told you on," was the reply. "Him as I said was the prince o' sailors an' likewise a king o' men." After a brief pause, he continued, "Howsom-

diver, I thank you all the same, old friend. You've done the kind thing by me an' no mistake. I'se a poor hand at puttin' my feelin's ship-shape an' straight forward i' the way of speechification, but I shall never forget it, comrade, no, not the longest day I ha' to live;" and so sayin', he gripped the hand of his host and shook it with a fervour that left the strength of his feelings in no possible kind of doubt.

"Don't mention it, messmate," said honest Ziah. "If them as has don't help them as hasn't, an' if them as can don't lend a hand to them as can't, then them as has an' can isn't men, but midges, an' small at that, an' I isn't a midge, thank God, though I says it myself, so there."

With this odd and characteristic deliverance, Ziah dismissed the subject of the sailor's debt of gratitude once and for ever.

"Ay, ay, my friend," said the sailor, unwilling to let matters drop so easily and readily, "that's all very well, but, d'ye see"——

"Yes, *very* well, an' I *don't* see," said Ziah, with an emphatic thump of timber-toe. "Now, as to this ship," he continued, striking off at a tangent and reverting to the subject of their conversation, "it's a marcy, seein' as how things is so bad, that they aren't a good deal worse. I reckon then that nigh a dozen poor fellows ha' gone to feed the fishes, or to be buried under the sands beneath the Rig. It's a sad business, an' what's done can't be helped. God ha' marcy upon their souls, and on ony poor folks as 'll suffer for them that's gone! But I was afear'd, do you know, judgin' from the rockets, and the minute guns, an' the blue

lights that it was a big ship like the *Deucalion* as was wrecked on the same rocks nigh on two years agone."

"The WHAT?" asked the sailor, opening his eyes wide with astonishment.

"The *Deucalion*," said Ziah. "Ha' you ever hear'd on her afore?"

"*Hear'd on her!*" said the sailor, "if I ain't hear'd on her, who has hear'd on her, I wonder? Nay, nay, old friend, you're clean on the wrong tack, d'ye see? The *Deucalion* it could not be, because I was myself on board that there gallant merchantman when she took fire an' foundered off the coast o' the Southern Islands, not more than a matter o' eighteen months or so agone. So you see the *Deucalion* couldn't be split to pieces on the Rig, could it now, old friend? The Rig *must* ha' been bewitched if it could manage that!"

Ziah Quayle's eyes now opened beyond their normal width, and his heart was in such a flutter of excitement that he could scarcely utter the question that trembled on his tongue-tip. At last he managed to say, although only in a low whisper—

"An' who was the skipper on board the *Deucalion* at that time, mate?"

"*Him*," said the sailor, also under his breath, as though a spell was on him. "Him as I told you on, him as I said was the prince o' sailors an' a king o' men!"

"An'—an'—an' were you the only man saved i' that shipwreck as well as this?—I mean when the ship foundered," asked Ziah, his hands clenched with suppressed excitement.

"That I can't rightly say, shipmate, for, d'ye see, we was all blown up sky-high, but when we came down again, I see'd *him* floating on a hen-coop."

Hear the sailor's own feelings overcame him. He was still very weak and seemed to be all but overcome.

Ziah Quayle was stricken with a great silence. Thoughts began to come in upon him thick and fast. He thought of the cottage and its beloved inmates, and he feared and trembled. He felt the need of caution, and of silence, and of time to think.

"I'll tell you what it is, mate," he said, in his usual voice, and with a brave show of indifference, "you're about done up; I'm your nurse, d'ye see? It's time to swing your hammock; we'll have a talk about that there ship to-morrow," and so saying he rose to his feet and busily prepared for rest.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ASTONISHMENT INCREASES, AND ZIAH QUAYLE IS TAKEN PRISONER!

The next day was wet; what the Yorkshire folks call a "white rain." When it is a white rain, it does not rain hard or heavily, but it rains constantly, persistently, incessantly; and if it begins in the forenoon, you may be quite sure that you are going to have, out and out, a rainy day. I don't think that Ziah Quayle was at all sorry for the change in the weather. It secured a day of comparative quiet, and as may be expected under the circumstances, the old tar did want to have a long talk with the sailor who, in his extremity, had found a temporary home by his hospitable hearth.

The truth is, that with all his philosophy, his notion of taking things easy, and "giving yourself time to think," Ziah had slept but little through the night, and that little was much interfered with by dreams concerning the *Deucalion*, in which the widow, the sailor, and John Stallibrass, each took a mingled and mysterious part. He certainly had given himself time to think, and the more he thought the more agitated and sleepless he became. So when he arose from his bed, drew up his little blind and saw a white rain, he fairly congratulated himself thereupon, and planned to

get all the sailor's strange and surprising story from him at his ain fireside.

Nevertheless, the old salt managed to restrain his curiosity and to repress his anxiety until his domestic duties were fairly over. He "holystoned the deck," that is what he called scrubbing the boards of the cabin floor. He prepared the breakfast, discussed it in comparative silence, performed sundry other duties connected with the "daily round and common task," and then, with a self-satisfied and contented "There!" he seated himself on the little settle on the opposite side of the fire to the easy-chair, which the sailor guest, in spite of his urgent entreaty, was not permitted to vacate, and said—

"Now, messmate, we can hev our bit o' talk out on the quiet an' wi' a good conscience. I never cares to talk much when on duty, or when it's my turn on the watch, but 'duty done an' watch run,' then I like a yarn as much as other folks, an' can spin one as is as good as some. You were a-sayin' last night, when I reminded you that it was time to swim your hammock, something about the *Deucalion*, as was a little bit surprisin' like. Would you mind tellin' me that 'ere bit o' news over again?"

"Not the least bit in the world, mate," said the sailor, who, it must be said, had a little curiosity of his own to satisfy, for Ziah's behaviour, to say the least of it, had been very odd. "Not the least bit in the world, mate. You was a-sayin' that the *Deucalion* broke her back on the Rig a matter o' two year or so agone; an' I was a-sayin' that that couldn't be, seein' as I was an A. B. seaman in that

self-same ship, an' a gallant merchantman she were as ever kissed salt water. I was on her, I said, when she foundered off the coast o' one o' the southern islands, Owhyhee I think they call it, an' that's not two year since, no, nor a year and a-half, accordin' to my reckonin', which, not havin' a almanac, o' course I can't swear to."

"An' on board that there *Deucalion*," said Ziah, "there was a skipper?"

"Yes, *him*," said the sailor. "That there name's enough for him from me, 'cause, d'ye see, I've got him tatooed like, in indelible ink, i' the very middle o' my heart, but folks in general called him Captain Stallibrass."

"An' that's true?" said Ziah, laying his hand on the sailor's knee, and looking eagerly into his two eyes.

"True, mate? in course it is," said the sailor, "*as true as my name's Sandy Muir.*"

"WHAT!" said Ziah, starting to his feet, and vigorously poking the fire which did not need stirring, in order to cover his surprise.

"Sandy Muir's my name, comrade," said the astonished seaman. "I might ha' mentioned it afore, but names don't go for much among friends, an' 'mate' an' 'comrade' comes more easy like. Besides, it didn't seem to me to be likely that I should want it any more, leastwise not until what you said about bein' 'saved for a purpose.' It ain't been worth much at any time, but it belongs to me such as it is. Do you see anything queer about it?"

The question was suggested no doubt by the admiring, inquiring, and, sooth to say, perspiring features

of Ziah Quayle. Honest Ziah Quayle felt himself to be on the borders, over them indeed, of a revelation, yet he meant to wait like a stoic for certainty and time to think.

"I must ha' my pipe this wet mornin'," said Ziah, "or I shall be havin' some twinges o' the rheumatics."

Hypocritical Ziah wanted his pipe, no doubt, but what he wanted more was an excuse for moving the clean white cloth that covered the sea-chest, without being observed, and as for that hint about the effect of tobacco as a preventive of the rheumatism, why, I am afraid it will hardly bear close examination.

Having privately accomplished his purpose, he resumed his seat, and puffed at his pipe in silent cogitation, the wondering sailor patiently waiting for what might happen next.

Now Ziah Quayle was in a quandary. If this was Alexander Muir, the sailor whom John Stallibrass saved from drowning, then that chest was his property. But if that chest was his property, and he was sailing in the *Deucalion* in the Southern Seas when the big ship went down beneath the Ridge, then how did Sandy Muir's sea-chest come to be cast ashore at Craigmuir? It will be seen that this problem was a tough one in the last degree.

"Maybe," said Ziah, "now that you are goin' to sea agin, an' ha' lost your goods and chattels, you'll be wantin' a sailor's chest, mate? When you leave here, I know the chaps 'll want to do something to rig you out agin, an' you'll need a box to put it in. There's that box there, what do you think of that?"

"Why, as to that, friend, it's very kind o' you.

Seaman's chests are all pretty much of a muchness, aren't they? An' this doesn't appear to be—Hallo! What's that?" he exclaimed, as he looked at the box. "What's them letters, A. M.?"

Then he rubbed his hands along the lid where the letters were burnt in.

"Hand-spikes an' bobstays!" he cried. "That's my bunk as sure as my name's ——. I say, mate, where did you pick *that* up?"

"But *is* it yours?" said Ziah. "It's a rum go to come for to claim a box in another man's house. It's a sort o' simony, or arson, or larcemony, or something o' that kind, isn't it?"

It is clear that honest Ziah's acquaintance with legal terms was of a very misty and uncertain kind.

"Nay," said Sandy Muir, for Sandy Muir it was without mistake. "I don't want to claim it, seein' as how its fallen into your hands. But it *was* mine as much as my head is now, though I begin to ha' some doubts about *that*, as things is turnin' out like. Did you see me a-feelin' round them letters? Well, I got that box by swoppin', and the chap that I swopped it of had burned his name so deep an' crosswise, that I got the ship's carpenter to cut it out square. He did it 'cordin' to my orders, an' he put a new square i' the place of it, an' screwed it fast by two bits o' battens under the lid."

"What was there in it?" said Ziah, pursuing his examination.

"Precious little, I believe," said Sandy; "a few sailor duds, an' a Bible as was precious. If you've got *that*, I'll own I would like to have it agin. There

was my name in it, written by *him*. God bless him! The grandest skipper that ever trod a deck!"

Further examination made identity perfectly clear. The Bible was brought out of a private drawer in the box, with a piece of red cloth wrapped round it as an outer cover. On the fly leaf was written in a clear bold hand—

"Alexander Muir, from J. S., in remembrance of June 12, 18—. From a friend to a friend."

At the sight of this the sailor said with strong feeling—

"Yes, June 12. When he risked his life to save the wretch that tried to murder him!"

Bowing his face in his hands, the poor fellow leaned forward with his elbows on his knees and wept.

"Softly, messmate; easy, comrade!" said Ziah kindly; "I'm very sorry to raise sad memories. Let's change the subject. Can you tell me how you an' your chest came to part company?"

"Yes," said Sandy, "when the *Deucalion* was at Honolulu I was taken sick o' the smallpox, an' put on shore for safety an' good nursin', an' didn't expect to go further wi' *him* on that voyage. But I had 'em light, an' I got better very soon, an' as I begged so hard the captain told me I might go on board again."

"I wasn't equal to carryin' my chest on board, so I sent it along by a darkie. When I gained the ship that night, I found that my chest was missin', an' I thought the coolie had ta'en a fancy to it an' had ta'en it off. When I came to inquire I found that the bunglin' nigger had carried it on board the *Pygmalion*, which had her anchor up, an' sailed out

of harbour that very day. So I bade good-bye to my chest, an' never expected to see it any more."

Ziah Quayle brought his hand down upon his thigh with a slap that made timber-toe shake again, and rising to his feet he took a turn or two across the cabin floor. The riddle was solved. At each turn he stood a moment or two in deep thought, then brought timber-toe down with a thud that shook the boards. At last his wooden-leg went clean through the floor, and Ziah was a prisoner. He wheeled round and round upon the imprisoned limb, which acted like a pivot, shouting—

"I see! I see! I see! Not *Deucalion*, but Pygm—alion! That's how the letters on the bow should have been pieced on! Pygmalion! That was the name o' the big ship that went down, an' Captain Stallibrass was *not* drowned on Craigmuir Ridge!"

"No," said Sandy, "I'll take my oath he wasn't. But what do you know about Captain Stallibrass, messmate; the grandest skipper and the noblest Christian that ever wore such a handle to his name?"

Again a sense of caution came over Ziah Quayle. He grew prudent all of a sudden. He remembered the young widow at the cottage, and saw the danger of raising hopes that might have to be dashed to the ground again.

"Lend a hand here, mate," said Ziah. "Just give timber-toe a tug out o' this here hole. There, thank you. Now, we'll see about dinner. I'm gettin' as hungry as a middy on short rations. You pare these here 'taties, an' I'll go and fetch a bit o' meat. We'll resume this here parliament after mess."

CHAPTER XX.

TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "DEUCALION." ZIAH QUAYLE AND SANDY MUIR BECOME CONSPIRATORS.

The more Ziah Quayle thought over the events of the morning, the more he saw the necessity of walking warily, lest any rumour should reach the ear of Mrs. Stallibrass, raising hopes only to be darkened again into a still more dark despair. From what he had already gathered, it was more than probable that John Stallibrass was drowned, and it mattered but little to the living mourners whether the scene of the tragedy was Craigmuir Ridge or the Southern Seas.

"He may be alive!" said Ziah to himself, and the bare thought was enough to send his wooden-leg thumping away far past the door of the little butcher's shop where his errand lay. His whole soul was moved within him at the bare possibility. But he was resolved to tread cautiously, only just now he scarcely saw in what direction to proceed.

On his return but little was said the while the mutton chops hissed and spluttered in the frying-pan and the sauce-pan containing the potatoes boiled and bubbled by its side. Ziah could only attend to one thing at a time.

But it was Sandy Muir's turn now to be excited

and inquisitive, and so again he blurted out the question—

"I say, old comrade, how do you come to know anything about *him*."

"Him" to Sandy Muir could but mean John Stallibrass, and that Ziah Quayle had come to know full well.

"Oh," said Ziah lightly, "there's a good many more folks than me that's heard of him. You don't meet wi' that kind o' man every day, an' one o' his sort goes a long way, both on land an' sea. Now let's have some dinner, messmate, an' then you shall tell me what's become of him."

It is marvellous how much people's state of mind has to do with the fashion in which they appropriate their food. Ordinarily Ziah, who had plenty of time on his hands, took plenty of time to discuss his rations. A wise course this I am told for everybody to follow, especially if, as in Ziah's case, the dental department of the machinery is not in good working order. But on this occasion the fine old tar risked an attack of indigestion, dyspepsia, and kindred evils with long names and worse consequences, in his anxiety to arrive at further information on the subject nearest to his heart.

His dinner was done, as he would have said, in the "twinklin' of a hand-spike," and Sandy Muir, who would have been content to talk of "*him*" to the neglect of the victualling office altogether, was not much longer in transacting the business. Again the "washing-up" and "siding away" processes were completed, Ziah's meditative pipe was

brought into requisition, and conversation was introduced by the pregnant question—

"Did you say, mate, that the *Deucalion* went down at sea?"

"Ay, ay, more's the pity," said Sandy Muir, "for she was as fine a craft as ever carried the flag o' the merchant sarvice, north, south, east, or west, an' the queen's navy itself couldn't more than match it. It was burnt, I tell you, burnt down to the water's edge. There wasn't a man on board as would leave the captain, an' he wasn't the man to desert his ship as long as there was a plank on her deck left for him to stand on. Night and day he worked i' smoke an' flame, until a storm brewed up from westward, an' even then we hoped to keep her afloat an' strand her. We seemed to be beatin' back an' beatin' out the fire. The captain hisself was as black as a nigger, an' his hands and face were scorched wi' flame. But we had some mineral oil on board, or something o' that sort, an' all at once the *Deucalion* was blowed up, sky high, like a hundred thousand rockets, an' the last I saw of Captain Stallibrass, he was clingin' to a hen coop i' the trough of a nasty sea.

"I an' another messmate clung to one o' the hatches that had come down slick, an' made a raft for us to float on. We tried to hail him, but the wind roared so loud, an' the sea ran so high, that we could neither reach him nor make him hear. Oh, God knows, I would ha' drowned ten times over if that would ha' saved him! Soon afterwards we were picked up by a 'Merican trader. Her captain kindly cruised about for some hours, but it were of no use,

an' then he clapped on all sail, an' away we went to New York.

"After tossin' an' knocking about a good deal, we arrived in London, me an' my mate. My mate signed articles in the London docks, an' has gone to sea again. I resolved to go an' see my native village once again on the coast o' bonny Scotland. There I meant to ship for Honolulu; instead of that I shipped for Craigmuir Ridge, worse luck, an' here I be. Thank you, comrade, for all your kindness to a poor shipwrecked sailor."

Ziah had listened to Sandy Muir's stirring story without interposing a single word, his whole attention concentrated on one point; then he said quietly—

"Why go to Honolulu, Sandy? I should ha' thought you had had enough o' them there regions, seein' as how they sarved you so bad. Why go there again?"

"Look here, Ziah Quayle," replied the sailor, with solemn earnestness, "I believe that my skipper, God bless him, is alive; I can't tell why I feel it so strongly. I've nothing for to go upon, only a dream, 'cept, indeed, a kind o' feelin' as I can never get rid on. It's my opinion—why, not that exactly—it's my feelin' like, that Captain Stallibrass is alive, an' I made up my mind that I would hunt for him right round the world, beginnin' at the spot where I see'd him last.

"When I was shipwrecked here on your coast, I kind o' gave it up in despair, an' so I've felt ever since, until I heard you say as how Providence 'spares our lives for a purpose,' an' now I believe for a dead certainty that that purpose i' this here case is to find my

skipper, an' find him I will, if he's above ground, an' not at the bottom o' the sea."

At this declaration Ziah Quayle's countenance brightened, and he expressed approval by a series of emphatic nods of the head and a few thumps on the floor with timber-toe. However Sandy's errand might look like a wild-goose chase, it showed at any rate that his heart was right, and that in him Ziah had a staunch ally in any efforts he might try to make in the same direction.

"Now tell me, mate," said Ziah, "has your dream anything to do with Honolulu?"

"It have," said Sandy, ungrammatically, but with great gravity. "I dreamt that Captain Stallibrass is kept a prisoner at Honolulu, an' cannot get away. I ha' seen him a-walking along the street; an' he said, 'Sandy, my lad, I cannot get away!' I've dreamed that 'ere dream a score o' times, an' I'm goin' to see if it's true; so there!"

Ziah's countenance fell. He himself had travelled all round the world. He knew Honolulu almost as well as he knew Craigmuir. Imprisonment there was very, very unlikely under the enlightened government that, thanks to Christian missions, has come to the Hawaiian group. A prisoner walking in the street, too, was a paradox too strong for his credulity.

Still there was more than enough of the ordinary sailor's superstition in him, of chivalrous devotion to Mrs. Stallibrass and the bairns, and of hero-worship for her lost husband, to make Ziah himself equal to a voyage either to the equator or the pole on the chance of finding him.

"An' do you really feel as though something will come of it, Sandy?" he inquired, as if seeking endorsement of some nebulous plan floating in his own mind.

"I do," responded Sandy. "An' look here, mate, whether I did or I didn't, that don't alter my duty, nor yet my desire. I owe my life to *him*, nay, I owe my soul to him; an' to sarve him, or failin' him, to sarve anybody that belongs to him, ay, if it was but a dog, I could willingly lay down and die."

Ziah felt himself to be in the presence of a true man; he felt that the secret would be safe in his keeping, that he might be fully depended upon to go all lengths with him. So he determined to tell him in turn all he knew, and to consult with him as to what was best to be done.

"Sandy Muir," said he, taking the sailor by the hand, "I'm going to tell you a secret. You'll keep it as sacred as the Bible you got from *him*, I know you will. You will help me, and I'll help you. What I want to do is to find John Stallibrass, an' to say to him—

"'Captain, your wife is waiting for you in tears and tenderness, under the shadow of Craigmuir Neb!'"

Then the old salt told his companion and comrade all he knew, and wound up with a reference to the widow's remarkable vision on the Wing and by the garden gate.

"I feel like you, Sandy," he concluded, "as if he were alive. Swear to me that you will help me to find him and to bring him to his weeping wife again. If we fail, things are no worse than they was, an' if we succeed, why then"—but the bare vision of success

was more than Ziah could endure without a trembling of the lip and a lump rising in his throat.

But Sandy understood him. And so the partners in the secret and the strange design, stood by the historic sea-chest, and with one hand grasping Ziah Quayle's, and the other holding up the treasured Bible in its covering of red cloth, Sandy Muir responded reverently and solemnly—

"Ziah Quayle, old friend, I will. So help me, God!"

CHAPTER XXI.

ZIAH QUAYLE HAS A BIT O' BUSINESS, AND SECURES THE INFLUENCE OF TWO FRIENDS AT COURT.

When Ziah Quayle next paid a visit to his friends up at The Cottage, it was evident both to the widow and myself that he was both preoccupied and constrained. Even the children were inclined to think that Ziah was not as "nice" as usual; and Trixie, who for some days past had been more or less suffering from that tormenting visitation the toothache, was led to ask her mamma whether Ziah might not be suffering from the same distressful cause.

Honest Ziah had not learned those questionable, even if seemingly desirable arts by which native transparency of character and conduct can be hidden, and superficial seeming can belie underlying facts. Yet he made a successful attempt, not exactly to throw us off the scent, for we were not on it in the remotest degree, but to prevent us from entertaining any suspicion, or from imagining that he was the keeper of any secret of importance.

"You don't seem quite yourself to-day," said Mrs. Stallibrass, with a kindly smile and in a tone of affectionate regard.

The old sailor looked with admiration on the attractive face and form before him, and the change which

had come over the widow had certainly brought additional charms of feature and general appearance.

"Why, you see, ma'am," said Ziah, "that there storm and shipwreck did kind o' upset me, an' I am not quite as young as I once was, though, for the matter o' that, I can't say as how I feels many signs o' old age. Please God, I shan't be a 'sheer hulk,' like poor Tom Bowling, not yet awhile at any rate;" and then he added, as if talking to himself, "No, no, not *yet* awhile, I sincerely hope and trust. Besides, that comrade o' mine he's been on my mind a good deal, poor fellow, an' o' course, havin' him on my hands, though he's as welcome as the cuckoo in April, an' 's a true blue Briton all out, has had its effect. An' then, ma'am, that there story o' yours, one doesn't hear such a tale as that to give one's in'ards a sort of general shakin' up, more than once in a lifetime, an' I can't get it out o' my head, no, not 'i my dreams; but there, I don't want to, until—hallo, my little fairy! come an' let's send you up as high as the moon," and catching up little Beatrice by way of diversion, Ziah avoided the necessity of finishing the sentence which would have made short work of his secret.

"Do you know I am going to have a visitor, I expect, in a week or two," said Mrs. Stallibrass. "My dear sister Agnes, Ronald's wife, you know, is coming to spend a little while with us. She has wanted to come for a long time, but I didn't want the dear heart of her to be made miserable at the sight of my own sad sorrow, so I rather discouraged her visits. Now, thank God, I can meet her with a smile, and both I and the children will be the better and brighter for

her company. Ronald, God bless him, has noticed the change in the tone of my letter, and the poor boy's heart is full of joy."

Now Ziah and Sandy Muir had planned in secret a visit to Edinburgh for the express purpose of taking Ronald M'Leod into their confidence and counsels, and this information determined the old salt to depart at once. He rightly argued to himself that Agnes would be a valuable and effective co-conspirator, and that her woman's heart would speak strongly on their behalf.

We were both taken thoroughly by surprise when Ziah proceeded to inform us that he was going away for a few days, so that we were not to be surprised if his daily visits to the cottage were suspended for a short season.

"Going away?" said the widow, "why, Ziah, I should as soon have expected the Neb to go away for a few days; and I am quite sure that Craigmuir will miss you almost as much as you would miss it. May I ask you where you are going, and what for?"

Ziah's reply was almost as apt as any that Machiavelli might have given.

"Why, you see, ma'am, that poor fellow that's at the cabin, Sandy something or other he calls himself, has told me his story. The bit o' business as I'm goin' on is connected wi' him, an' he sadly wants a friend just now. It isn't i' the natur' o' Ziah Quayle to say him nay, especially like when I can do a poor shipwrecked mate a bit o' sarvice; but this time, at any rate, I shan't be long away."

"I sincerely hope not," was the reply; "for what

the children will do without you I don't know, and I shall miss you very much, Ziah. Don't be longer away than you can help, please."

All this was very pleasant to Ziah, but it materially added to his troubles; for at this period, as he afterwards informed me, he really did entertain the idea of joining personally in the search for John Stallibrass.

It took him a long time to say good-bye, but at last he secured his dismissal by asking that Georgie and Trixie might go with him for a walk on the Wing. It was a fine day, and the little folks were delighted at the prospect of an outing in "dear Ziah's" company.

When they were fairly out of sight of the cottage, Ziah began to spin a yarn, and gradually led the conversation round to the sad and stormy day when their mamma was so very ill.

"Georgie, my little man," said Ziah, seating himself on the trunk of a fallen tree, and placing one of his young companions on either side of him, "do you remember what you did that day, you and little Trixie?"

"Yes," said the little fellow, fixing his dark eyes on his friend's sun-browned face, "we asked God to make her nice again, and to take away her tears."

"Yes, and He *did*, Ziah," affirmed Trixie, nodding her wise little head, "and I asked Him not to let them come back any more, and they haven't; and I'm going, and Georgie's going, to ask God everything every day. Aren't we, Georgie?" With which sentiment Georgie at once agreed.

"That's right, my dears," said the old sailor,



FRIENDS AT COURT.

Page 129.

tenderly and lovingly holding a hand of each. "Now, I'm going to ask you both to do something nice and kind for me all the time I am away. Will you do it?"

Ziah's question only elicited an amused smile and a look of expectancy. They knew he did not need any more assurance than that. Ziah's requests in that quarter had the joy of privilege and the force of law.

"I knew you would," said Ziah. "Now I tell you what I want you to do. Every night when you go to bed, and every mornin' when you get up, I want you to say this at the end of your prayers—'And O God, help dear Ziah to do what he wants to do for us and dear mamma, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'"

This sentence he made them repeat again and again, until he had no doubt that it was clearly written on their mind and memory.

"That's it, my blessed little Britons!" said Ziah, delighted at his success, "that'll do us more good than double rations, an' send the ship on faster than a fair wind an' a press o' sail!"

"What ship, Ziah?" said Georgie curiously.

"What ship!" said Ziah hopefully. "Why, the ship that will bring—what Ziah wants to do for you and for dear mamma," and with that reply the little querist had to be content.

Ziah Quayle took his young charge back to the cottage, gave them a parting kiss at the garden-gate; and as he bent his steps towards the cabin, timber-toe was made to give a few extra thumps, by way

of emphasis, as he said aloud, rubbing his hands the while with satisfaction—

"There, Ziah Quayle, you've scored one this day an' no mistake. They say it's always good to have a friend at court. You've got two friends, an' the King 'll listen to the innocent darlin's. He can't refuse 'em; an 'dear Ziah' will be helped to do what he wants to do. Please God, he may! Please God, he may!"

So saying, so praying, so thinking, the old sailor prodded his way down hill at a tremendous rate, as if he had an earnest of final victory. Ziah's notion of enlisting allies was probably singular and uncommon, but it was a very wise way for all that!

CHAPTER XXII.

RONALD M'LEOD RECEIVES A "DEPPITATION," AND ZIAH QUAYLE FORGETS HIS MANNERS.

THE next day Ziah Quayle and Sandy Muir set off for Edinburgh. Ziah's quick ear had caught, and his retentive memory had recorded the fact mentioned in the widow's story, that her brother Ronald, who loved John Stallibrass as his own life, resided at The Hermitage, in that fair queen of cities, and under the "shadow of Arthur's Seat."

With that much information to guide them they set out, trudging it for the most part, and relieving themselves by short journeys by stage-coach or railway, as their limited resources would allow. Timber-toe was hard put to it at times, but it was under the control of a strong will, and that in turn was controlled by a strong inspiration; and so in less time than might have been expected they arrived at their journey's end. They enlisted the aid of a "canny Scot" to direct them to Ronald's abode.

"Ou ay," said the tall, spare Celt of whom they "spiered," "you mean the painter callant wha's bit pictur's are a' the talk o' the toon. Weel, you're a braw lang twa mile or sae frae Arthur's Seat. An' what may you be wantin' wi' the M'Leod the noo?"

Hereupon the stranger peered at them from under

a pair of big grey brows, pulling out his mull the while, and applying a pinch of snuff to his nose, mull, pinch, and nose being all of proportionately large dimensions. Then he continued, with a twinkling eye, as he surveyed the two sailors—

"Maybe you're for havin' your twa sel's put on the canvas, an' ca'd 'Twa Sailor Laddies.'"

"Nay, friend," said Ziah, with a quiet smile, "what we ha' to say to him concerns ourselves. We didn't ask you to help to carry our message, seein' as how our own backs are broad enough to bear it, an' our lips can shut tight enough to hold it. But we'll gi' you a sailor's 'thank you,' if you'll put us i' the way o' doin' our errand."

"Weel said, weel said," replied the Scot with a humorous twinkle. "You ken I only wanted to see if you could haud your ain in this big ceety, for it's easy to ken that you are mair accoostomed to ship than shore, an' Sawny's a wee bit apt to—but there, you'll win your awmous. Clim' this wee bit hill, turn your back fairly on the church you'll fin' at the tap, an' then walk as straight as a blin' horse; an' when you come to the toll-house, spier o' the toll-man, for you'll be within a stane's throw o' The Hermitage, an' he'll point to the varra hoose. I wish you a good e'en."

Our travellers did as they were directed, and were rewarded for their trust in the stranger's knowledge and good faith by finding The Hermitage without delay. It was a small but beautiful villa, low and long, and having a sort of bungalow look about it. It was surrounded by trees and shrubs, and almost covered with graceful creeping plants; a

true artist's home, and one which brought from Ziah the exclamation—

"Ay, Sandy, lad, but it's a bonnie spot, an' all the more so for knowing that there's a bonny couple inside it. Now for it!" he said softly, placing his hand on the door-bell.

Sandy repeated the words. "Ay, comrade, now for it! God gi' us good luck."

"Ay, ay, that's the way to put it, Sandy. I believe in luck that God gives. As for the heathenish sort"—

Ziah's remarks were cut short by the opening of the door. As soon as Ronald M'Leod cast his eyes on Ziah, his first thought was, "Here's a capital subject for a sketch!" for the artist, true to his taste and calling, was ever on the look-out for the striking and the picturesque. Ziah was both. This insured for them a gracious reception. But when the name of John Stallibrass was mentioned it acted like a talisman, and Ronald's interest was aroused at once. No man on earth loved and honoured his brother man more than Ronald M'Leod loved and honoured Honest John; and his wife, Agnes, in this, as in all other respects, was of one mind with her husband.

When that lady appeared to act the hostess to our two adventurers, Ziah said to himself that she was handsome enough and amiable enough to account for all Ronald's tribulation at the thought of losing her. She had them speedily ensconced in the sitting-room, and treated them as members of the family.

Here Sandy Muir again told his story, and again affirmed his conviction that John Stallibrass was alive. Ziah Quayle then took up the parable and waxed

warm and eloquent on the subject of the widow's vision.

"'Cordin' to my thinkin', sir, there's something in it. It's as plain as Craigmuir Neb wi' a blue sky that Captain Stallibrass is not under the Rig; it's plain to see as Flamboro' Lighthouse that he was seen alive after the *Deucalion* busted up; an' it's likewise plain that nobody's ever come for'ards to say John Stallibrass is dead. An' so I says to myself, an' Sandy Muir here, he says to hisself, says we—'Then where is he?' An' that, 'cordin' to my thinkin', is the thing we've gotten to find out. So Sandy Muir made up his mind to go and seek him. I had thought o' goin' with him, but them at The Cottage pulls hard agin it, an' the anchor, God bless 'em, is hard either to lift or drag. You see, sir," he continued, reverting to the main point, and anxious to leave no persuasion unemployed, "Sandy Muir was picked up at sea, and it soonds to reason that Captain Stallibrass may ha' been picked up too. As for his neither comin' home nor writin' to his friends, why that's a awk'ard point; but then there's Sandy's dream, an' maybe he 'can't get away.' There, sir, that's the entire consarn, an' we've come to Edinbro to ask you what's to be done. That's it, ain't it, Sandy?"

"That's about the size of it, Ziah. Only this here, likewise, that whoever says yes, an' whoever says nay, whoever lends a hand, and whoever doesn't, I'm going to Honolulu to seek John Stallibrass."

It is not too much to say that Ronald was overwhelmed with astonishment, and for some moments found it impossible to shape a reply; and the fair

Agnes could do nothing but look at him, at Ziah, and at Sandy by turns; but the heaving at her chest and the rapid changes of colour and pallor on her cheeks told of emotion not to be restrained.

Then Ronald took each sailor by the hand. "Thank you both," said he. "Come what will of it, we shall never forget that—what a strange story!—Oh, dear, dear! can it be probable that Honest John is still alive?"

"Why as to that, sir," said downright Ziah, "I can't say as how I think it is probable, but the question puts itself this here way to me, 'Can it be *possible?*' An' to that I says YES in capital letters. An' when it's a king o' men like Captain Stallibrass that's consarned, why, turn the world upside down to find him, *I* says, an' what I says, I thinks; so there."

"You are right, Ziah Quayle," said Agnes. "You are right. It must be done. If I were a man, I'd go myself."

"God bless your dear heart, mum, for that word," said Sandy Muir, rubbing his hands.

Neither did Ronald need any persuasion on that point. His heart went with them thoroughly. But he did not exactly see how to set about it or what was best to be done. In the world of art Ronald was a genius. In the matter-of-fact world, where things have to be promptly planned as well as done, he was not, as his father said, a genius at all.

For a while the party sat in a sort of brown study, when, again remembering her duties as hostess, Agnes asked Ziah and Sandy to go and look at Ronald's pictures. When Ronald joined them he was greatly amused and

gratified with the honest criticism with which plain-spoken Ziah accompanied his inspection. The sea-pieces especially came in for a little smart handling; and Ronald had to acknowledge that the old tar was right, and that the mistakes he pointed out arose from his own defective acquaintance with maritime life.

In the middle of the room, and still on the easel, was a large landscape painting which Ronald had painted by commission for a nobleman who had become not only a patron to the artist but a friend to the man, and with whom Ronald was on terms of the closest intimacy.

"What do you think of this, Ziah?" said Ronald, drawing aside the sheet that covered it. "I hope this will escape your criticism, especially as it has neither sea nor ship in it."

"Ay, ay, sir!" exclaimed Ziah, stepping back a few paces to get a better view, his whole face lighting up as with a pleasant memory. That's as like as life. I seem to mind every oak and birch on the banks, an' every twist an' bend i' the burn!"

"Why, do you know the place, Ziah?" inquired Ronald.

"Know it? ay, just as well as I know Craigmuir Neb. Why, it's Weyburn Glen, just as you stand lookin' up it from Granta Brae. I've stood beside his lordship a-lookin' at it many a time. He used to say it was the finest sight on his estate."

"You're right, Ziah," replied Ronald, "it is Weyburn Glen. But how do you come to know Lord Weyburn?"

"Why, I've sailed pretty nigh right round the world

with him," said Ziah. "An' a nobleman he is by name *and* natur'."

Again, as on a former occasion, Ziah brought down timber-toe on the floor with a thump, spun round it like a teetotum, crying, "I've got it! I've got it! I've got it! Hurrah for Lord Weyburn and the *Highland Lassie!* 'Scuse me, ma'am," said Ziah, turning respectfully to Mrs. M'Leod, "I'se afeard I've gone and been an' lost my manners. Mr. Ronald, let Sandy Muir go an' tell Lord Weyburn the story of John Stallibrass. His lordship's a sailor an' a traveller, an' only wants some excuse to go gallivantin' without a moment's notice to the other side o' the world. Go an' ax him, an' say, Ziah Quayle says, 'If you please.'"

The suggestion was hailed as an inspiration. Instant action was determined on. And so ended the first stage of the important mission of Ziah Quayle.

When the old man retired to rest that night, he confided his belief to Sandy Muir that Trixie had been a-sayin' her prayers to some purpose.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GIVES A PEEP AT WEYBURN CASTLE AND INTRODUCES ITS NOBLE OWNER.

As none of the parties interested in the matter were at all inclined to let the grass grow under their feet, arrangements were made at once for a journey to Weyburn Castle, the ancestral seat of the nobleman on board whose yacht Ziah had served for years as confidential servant and well-trusted though humble friend.

Ronald M'Leod was worldly-wise enough not to go without Ziah Quayle, and that worthy was equally sure and certain that Sandy Muir's story would go directly to his lordship's heart.

"We will go as a deputation of three," said Ronald, "and storm the castle in company."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Ziah, in the height of his satisfaction. "When this here glorious kind o' business came up, fust one deppitation came to me; that was Sandy here. Then two deppitations came to you; that was Sandy an' me. Now there's three deppitations a-goin' to see his lordship. Then they'll be four deppitations a-goin' to find John Stallibrass. An', then, mark my words, there'll be five deppitations a-goin' to see the widow as won't be a widow then, for one o' them there deppitations 'll be John Stallibrass, please God! What say you, Sandy Muir?"

For all answer Sandy said quietly and impressively—

"If the Captain's aboveground an' not under water, then, God willin', I shall bring him home." Ronald looked at the speaker, and saw in lip and brow and eye, and clenched hand and straightened form, the spirit that makes heroes, and compels success where success is possible, and said, as he gripped the sailor's hand—

"I believe you, Sandy, with all my heart."

Weyburn Castle was situated near the borders of the Highlands and in the midst of a romantic and beautiful region such as is often found in bonnie Scotland. It was built after the true mediæval pattern, though it was comparatively a modern structure. It had, however, a plenitude of nineteenth century comforts in its architectural arrangements, which would have greatly astonished any "bold baron" or "noble ladye" of the olden time.

The Castle stood on a tall rock that jutted from the side of a steep and thickly-wooded slope, and gave quite an' "auld warld" glamour to the landscape in which it was a conspicuous object. The entire valley, above which it stood in imposing grandeur, might have been taken bodily from the more striking portions of the Rhine-land. Only that, instead of that proud river, the valley was intersected by the rapid burn or mountain river known as the Wey, which sparkled in the sun like an uncoiled ribbon of silver, broken here and there by rock or boulder or intervening brow, and brightened in other places by cascades; so it bubbled and babbled and brawled and bickered down the glen, really and truly represented by the fine line of the poet Keats, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

The approach to the Castle was chiefly by a long and sinuous road through the wood along the slopes, and ended in a castellated entrance to the grounds, whose stone pillars were surmounted by the ancient crest on the armorial bearings of Weyburn's noble race.

Its noble owner, for a wonder, was at home. That was indicated by a flag which was run up above the highest tower, and streamed above the valley, just as in the war-like olden days. His visits were usually as brief as they were few. Lord Weyburn was decidedly of a roving disposition. He was fond of the sea, fond of travel, fond of exploring in strange places, and withal, fond of doing good, much good in unusual channels, uncommon fashions, and unknown ways. The tenants on his large estates, high and low, had much of the character of the old retainers, and were prepared to show hearty fealty to their chief whenever opportunity presented itself.

Ronald M'Leod's visiting card was an 'open sesame' of instant potency, and even brought my lord from the library to give him a hearty and unaffected greeting. He was a tall, well-formed man, whose chestnut hair and strongly prominent features gave indubitable witness of his Celtic origin. He was clad in an undress of his favourite Scotch plaid, and had that subtle aristocratic air about him which denoted his rank and breeding without reference to his clothes. He had a genial expression on his face and a kindly blue-grey eye, that could on occasion flash a scorching fire from beneath its bushy brow, though it seldom did; for he took life easily, and let things wag pretty much

as they listed, so long as no grievous wrong was done. In such cases his butler Robbie Brownjohn declared that he was "a tartar not to be approached without muckle caution." He was bearded like the pard, and his surplusage of hair in that quarter was balanced by the baldness of his head, which, except about the temples and around from ear to ear, was bright and smooth, and, as he used to put it, "as innocent of hair as a billiard ball."

His greeting to Ronald was warm and characteristic—

"Hail to thee, Ronald! Thane of The Hermitage, Knight of the Easel, Royal Academician that shall be, and ever welcome friend all the time! To what stroke of good fortune am I indebted for this unexpected pleasure?"

"To these two good friends of mine, my lord, who"——

"Why, Ziah Quayle, old messmate! Is it you? Give us your hand. It's the grip of an honest man and a faithful friend; and neither the one nor the other 'gang this gait, or ony ither,' so often as is to be desired."

Ziah's old eyes fairly danced with delight at such a greeting from such a quarter, as he replied, touching his grey forelock, as in duty bound—

"God bless your lordship for rememberin' a poor old servant so kindly. I'se right glad an' fain to see your lordship. It minds me o' old times when we smelt salt water together"——

"Ay, ay," said his lordship, laughing, "and a good many other smells not quite so pleasant. Do you

remember the time when we slept in a Laplander's hut, Ziah, and you plugged your nose with tobacco, as you said, to give it a higher flavour?"

"Why no, not slept, exactly, my lord," said Ziah with a twinkle. "Them there little hop-skip-an'-jumpers, an' biters likewise, found us something else to do, It was like that there Mr. Gulliver you used to tell us about, that was staked down i' dwarfland wi' needles, only the needles were stuck all over us, an' not i' the ground at all. I wished they were!"

Again his lordship's hearty laugh resounded through the hall as he turned inquiringly to Sandy Muir.

"This is Sandy Muir, your lordship; he's"——

"Your friend, I suppose, Ziah, and Mr. M'Leod's protégé for the present. That's enough just now."

"Yes, my lord, you may well say he's a prodigy," said Ziah, who evidently did not understand French, "an' such you'll find him, an' a upright, down straight honest sailor as well."

"All right, that will do for the present; off you go to Brownjohn's quarters. You know them of old. Take your friend with you, and, I need not say, make yourselves at home."

Ziah touched his grey locks; Sandy made a sailor's bow, just as though he was making ready for a hornpipe; and the two disappeared, to eat and drink the best, and to be lodged like knights-errants, only more comfortably, such as indeed they were.

Closeted together in the library Ronald rapidly sketched the strange errand on which they had come.

"But," said he, "I want you to hear their story from their own lips."

"All right, Ronald," replied his lordship; "and now, how is the picture of Weyburn Glen progressing? By the way, I want you to bring Mrs. M'Leod here before I leave. I daresay I shall be off again in a week or two. The fit is not on me at present, but it generally comes without warning. Have you seen that new book of travels that is making such an impression, 'A Ride on a Dromedary through Nubia. Written by Major Somebody or other?"

So he rattled on. I need say no more. That specimen will sufficiently show the manner of man he was. During the evening Ziah and Sandy Muir were called in to tell their story. For a wonder, his lordship listened without interrupting them more than half a dozen times at least, which was evident enough that his feelings were profoundly stirred.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LORD WEYBURN COMES TO A QUICK DECISION, AND THE "HIGHLAND LASSIE" STANDS OUT TO SEA.

AFTER the two sailors had told their story, Lord Weyburn sat silent for a little, then took a few turns up and down the library, then excused himself for a moment and prolonged his walk up and down the spacious entrance hall. Robbie Brownjohn heard his measured footfall, and knew, as he afterwards informed the sailors, that "his lordship had gotten his considerin' cap on. And when he takes it off again, he'll be off as sure as eggs is eggs."

When he returned to his guests, and was seated in his place, he turned to Ziah Quayle.

"And do you mean to say, Ziah, that you intend that wooden leg of yours to carry you all the way to the South Sea Islands?"

"I means to say, my lord, that such was my intention, an' if so be as it becomes a necessity, such is my intention still. But Mrs. Stallibrass, God bless her, and the children, God bless 'em, hadn't ought to be left by their selves. And when I was comin' away, the widow said, says she, though she didn't know where I was acomin' to or what for, she said, as how she didn't know what she would do without me; an' that kind o' talk gave me a grip like, an' I felt like a

ship afloatin' out o' harbour an' the anchor dropped sudden "——

"Right, Ziah," said his lordship, "you must stop and take care of her." Ziah knew him of old, and he knew that that settled the matter once for all.

Turning to Sandy Muir, his lordship proceeded to say—

"Well, Sandy Muir, I suppose you want a berth aboard ship again, don't you?"

"If that ship is agoin' to Honolulu, I do, my lord; but if not, *not*." And his lordship knew that that settled that matter as much as his own fiat was used to do.

He rang the bell and a footman appeared.

"Tell Brownjohn I want him."

Robbie Brownjohn the butler obeyed the call, saying—

"Yes, yes, I knowed how it would be when he was walking up and down the hall with his considerin' cap on. *I* knew orders for off and away would follow pretty quick."

"Brownjohn, send off a message to Edinburgh. Tell Captain Allan to bring the *Highland Lassie* into Leith Harbour, fitted and victualled for a voyage to the South Seas."

The butler bowed and disappeared.

"I should have liked to keep you here a week Ronald, but time presses. Go home in the morning and tell your wife that your health needs a few months' cruise on salt water. Be ready to sail on Tuesday morning. Sandy Muir, I'll give you a line to Captain Allan; sign articles as soon as the *Highland Lassie* comes to Leith. I won't tell you to do your

duty; you will do it, like a man. Ziah Quayle, old messmate, bid me good-bye in the morning and go home. Take good care of Mrs. Stallibrass—*and of your secret.* Now, lads, get your suppers and go to bed. Ronald, have a cigar."

Having delivered himself rapidly of these several orders, including the latter, for it was little less than an order, his lordship lit a cigar, flung himself on a sofa with as much indifference as if he had merely been ordering a late breakfast, and again ran off into a one-sided conversation with Ronald about anything and everything that came uppermost in his mercurial mind.

During the later hours of evening his mood changed, and another and better side of his character presented itself.

"Ronald, my boy, that brother-in-law of yours was a noble fellow, *is* a noble fellow, for somehow or other the simple and fervent faith of those two honest fellows has infected me. It is a queer errand; but I've often promised myself another trip to those beautiful islands, and if we don't succeed in our search, as I hope to God we may, the trip will do you a world of good, and you'll fill your sketch-book with splendid subjects for your canvas. Don't trouble about anything; you are my guest throughout. By the way, I might as well give you a cheque for that picture of the Glen. Send it to get framed, with orders to deliver it here and to hang it in the new gallery in the south wing. Give this to Sandy Muir," he continued, handing Ronald a bank note; "he'll want rigging out for sea. That dear sister of yours, God help her! How I

feel for her! If John Stallibrass *is* in the flesh, she shall fold him to her heart before she is a twelvemonth older. I must see those children, but that will have to wait, I suppose, till we come back and bring papa with us. What a day that would be! God help us and give us good luck!"

"Amen," said Roland solemnly and earnestly.

It does not take many words, and does not need any set phrases to make a prayer. The two men prayed then, and were so understood in heaven.

"I can't tell you how warmly my heart thanks you," began Roland, with some difficulty in the management of his voice.

"Don't want any telling, my friend," said the nobleman, "I've a good big account to square where a clean balance sheet is most wanted, and I want it too, God knows; so it's a selfish business, you see, after all. Besides, if I did not sail south, I should sail north, and it's all one to me which way the *Highland Lassie* turns her bows; and what's more and better, John Stallibrass has found another henchman in me, willy nilly. It will not do to be outdone in loyalty to Christian manhood and sympathy with sorrow by Ziah Quayle and Sandy Muir. *Noblesse oblige,* you know, so that settles that matter. By the way, did I ever tell you of my last escapade among the Bedouin Arabs? It's worth hearing;" and straightway the good-natured and thoughtful, though loquacious peer went off at a tangent, and effectually prevented Ronald from making any second attempt at expressing the deep gratitude which was flowing around his heart.

As the two sailors were undressing for bed that night, Sandy Muir felt it in his heart again to express his admiration of Lord Weyburn.

"He's one in a thousand, Ziah, his lordship is," said the admiring tar.

Ziah had just unstrapped timber-toe from its position previous to laying it aside for the night. He paused to reply with some gusto—

"He's one in a hundred million thousand! I'll tell you what it is, Sandy Muir, him an' John Stallibrass makes a pair; they're both kings o' men, God bless 'em; an' if any man living was to go for to deny it, I'd"—Here Ziah stood on his one leg, and, seizing timbertoe by the smaller end, he waved that formidable weapon round his head, and continued, "I'd knock his head into—into—the middle o' next week!"

It was fortunate for Sandy Muir on that occasion that he was in no danger of differing from Ziah in his opinion.

On returning to Edinburgh, whither he was accompanied by Sandy Muir and Ziah Quayle, the latter with a handsome gift from his lordship in his pouch, Ronald was gratified to find that Agnes rejoiced at Lord Weyburn's prompt decision.

"You need a rest, dear," she said, "and I gladly let you go. And if—oh may God grant it,—you find John, it will be the happiest day of my life, and my real happiness dates from the day he gave me back to you."

So it came to pass that in a few days the *Highland Lassie* sailed out of Leith Harbour, having on board its

noble owner, Ronald M'Leod, and Sandy Muir, together with Captain Allan and a picked crew, bound for the far-off Southern Islands, intent on solving the mystery that surrounded the fate of Honest John Stallibrass.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE "HIGHLAND LASSIE" DROPS ANCHOR IN THE HARBOUR OF HONOLULU.

To Ronald M'Leod the outward voyage was one of almost unmixed enjoyment. Had it not been for the thought of Agnes absent, his sister Maggie sorrowful, and for the suspense attaching to the fate of his long-lost brother, his satisfaction would have been complete. He was not very long before he obtained a happy and final riddance of that hideous *bête noir* of unaccustomed voyagers, sea-sickness. Then out came his sketch-book, and it may be safely said that it never went in again until the ship dropped anchor in the haven whither they would be.

He drew the ship in detail, and would have past an examination in things nautical even under Ziah Quayle's critical eye. He drew the sea, the sky, seizing on their various moods and changeful aspects, and so obtaining many a valuable hint for after use. Then he set to work to sketch Lord Weyburn, Captain Allan, Sandy Muir, and all the crew in turn. He little thought when he amused himself with this latter employment that he was practising for a more serious and exciting trial of his skill by and by. But I must not anticipate, neither must I detain the reader with any details of the voyage. They were favoured almost

throughout with fair winds and good weather. Ziah Quayle would certainly have had a word to say on that subject concerning Georgie and Trixie's bit o' prayer. The excellent sailing qualities of the *Highland Lassie* had fair play, and his lordship could hardly believe his own eyes when he saw, looming largely through the mists of early morning, the stately mountains and imposing peaks of the islands of the Hawaii group.

"Nonsense, Captain Allan. It can't be Hawaii! Why, it's only yesterday that we left Leith. Some good fairy must have been filling our sails for us. It's Hassan and his magic carpet over again. A chapter out of the 'Arabian Nights.'"

If Ziah Quayle had heard his lordship's words, I think he would have replied, "Very likely, my lord. The fairy's name is Trixie, an' it's Georgie and not Hassan that's used the magic carpet, mornin' *and* evenin', ever since the sailin' o' the ship."

That, at any rate, was Sandy Muir's conviction, and he did not hesitate to give his opinion to his comrades. "I'll tell you what, lads," said he, "there's something more and better on our side than any sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, an' that's a kind Providence, mates, that's a helpin' us to find '*him*.'"

Ronald M'Leod looked upon the distant outline with intense interest and overpowering emotion. All that he had ever read of the Polynesian islands, all that he had ever heard of these charming groups, Sandwich, Friendly, Pelew, Society, and all the rest, had kindled and nourished a life-long desire to visit and view them for himself. And now, at last, he

was in sight of the most wonderful and attractive of them all!

He thought of Captain Cook, the discoverer of these islands, and of his tragic fate. And then he thought of John Stallibrass, and wondered what *his* fate was. The tears that rushed to his eyes blotted out the mountain peaks of Owhyhee, and in their stead arose the vision of the mourning widow and dear sister in the cottage by Craigmuir Neb. As he turned away in response to the call of the gong for breakfast, he felt that tropic beauties, artistic attractions, romantic memories, volcanic marvels, and all else in which his soul could revel with delight, were as nothing, and would count as nothing in the scale, when weighed against the possible discovery of John Stallibrass, his hero, brother, benefactor, friend!

Under the orders of Lord Weyburn, Captain Allan directed his course straight for Honolulu. His lordship's principal ground for hope, he did not scruple to confess it, was the supernatural element in the stories of Ziah Quayle and Sandy Muir. These were only two material facts to go upon, and both together did not in themselves offer much prospect of success. The one was that John Stallibrass was seen alive and floating on a hen-coop after the explosion; the other was that Sandy Muir and a comrade had subsequently been picked up by a passing vessel, and it certainly was equally possible that some other ship might have picked up the man for whom they were now in search, or he might have been caught in the set of a current which drifted him to land. To set against this meagre ground of hope, there was the depressing and all but

overwhelming fact, that for nearly two years, so far as he could reckon from Sandy Muir's dim and uncertain data, John Stallibrass had not only never put in an appearance, but he had made no sign.

On the other hand, there was that remarkable vision of his wife's or widow's, so vivid, so emphatic, so intelligible, and that peculiar dream of Sandy Muir's, so striking, so pertinacious; and last, not least, there was the simple faith, under strong impressions, of both Ziah and Sandy, so pious, so questionless, so sincere. His lordship felt drawn to follow the lines they had indicated, and to give, as he said, "honest faith in the supernatural a fair chance."

Now Lord Weyburn was highly intelligent, a little given to philosophizing, and a hard-headed Scotchman to boot, so that he could not be said to be credulously inclined. But he had a Scotchman's faith in and reverence for revealed religion, and he could not, dared not doubt the possibility of divine intervention, or "limit the Holy One of Israel." Moreover, he argued that if ever there was a case in which the unusual and the strange might be brought to bear to solve a mystery, it was the case of such a sorrow as that of Mrs. Stallibrass, and such a man as her noble husband, always supposing that he really was alive. The wish also was no doubt largely father to the thought; and so Lord Weyburn made Sandy Muir his mentor in the matter, and at his suggestion they made straight for Honolulu, the principal port and capital of the Hawaiian group.

"All that can be done shall be done," quoth his lordship to himself; "the issue must be left with God."

Sandy Muir never had a thought of discovering the missing idol of his heart, except in connection with that city. Towards it he set his face steadfastly, true as the needle to the pole. There and there only, he said, should he find the man who had saved him from drowning while the murderous knife was still in his belt, and for whom the grateful soul, truly a brand plucked from the burning, would willingly have died.

At length the *Highland Lassie* dropped her anchors in the clear blue transparent waters of the bay which kissed the feet of the young and prosperous city of Honolulu.

Not so long ago, heathenism and savagery of the most degraded type and of the most ferocious character had here uninterrupted sway. Darkness covered the land and gross darkness the people. But on them hath a great light shined, thanks to brave, bold missionary pioneers, and the gospel, which is one day to win the world for Christ, hath expelled the legion of devils from the fierce demoniac. He sits clothed and in his right mind.

Honolulu is now a centre of civilisation amid those isles of ocean, and we may well hope will so continue for many a century to come.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORD WEYBURN BECOMES A SON OF CONSOLATION, AND SANDY MUIR SPEAKS HIS MIND.

As the beautiful yacht lay upon the broad bosom of the bay, rising and falling on the gentle billows like a swan at rest, Ronald M'Leod sauntered to and fro alone on its polished deck, immersed in thought. The scene was eminently beautiful, but now that he had arrived at the very spot which was to be either the sepulchre of doubt or the grave of hope, he had no eye, no heart for that. A great sense of the hopelessness of his errand came over him; hope now could scarcely flutter into life.

He thought he might perhaps obtain some tidings of his brother's death, if he had been saved while clinging to his frail life-buoy out at sea. But to find him alive and contented to live away from his darling Maggie and the children! That altogether surpassed belief. Of course he might be alive, he might be ill. He refused to speculate any more, and with a heavy sigh he turned towards the saloon, which was erected on the deck.

"Nay, nay, Ronald, laddie, dinna sigh sae sadly," said Lord Weyburn, putting his arm within that of his friend and gently turning him to resume his walk. "It'll be time enough to greet when we ken the warst.

Depend on it, the guid God aboon us a' is a true Friend to lippen tae, an' I winna gie up hope till Sandy Muir's harried Honolulu frae tapmost croon tae water's edge."

It was one of Lord Weyburn's peculiarities that when he was the subject of tender feelings and softened sympathies, he almost invariably spoke in a broad Scotch accent; and little wonder, for, according to my thinking, there is no dialect which so thoroughly lends itself to the plaintive expression of the deeper feelings of the heart.

"I can't help feeling anxious and depressed," replied Ronald sadly. "I have had no such cloud upon my soul since the time that John was supposed to be lost on the Craigmuir Ridge. I feel as though the very ripples round the vessel and on the sands, and the sighing of the wind among the palms, are in the minor key, and are chaunting a dirge for the noble heart that will beat on earth no more. Look at the stars as they come out one by one, to hang their lustrous lamps in this calm and lofty sky. To me they seem to be gazing down with pity for our vain and useless search. O John Stallibrass, my more than brother, how willingly would I give my right hand for the pleasure and the joy of gripping yours just once again! As I have been walking along the deck to-night, the words and tune of that tenderest and sweetest of our national songs has been continually running in my mind,—

"Bonnie Charlie's noo awa',
Safely ower the friendly main;
Mony a heart will break in twa
Should he ne'er come back again.

"Sweet's the lav'rock's note and lang,
Lilting wildly up the glen;
But aye to me he sings ae sang,
'Will ye no come back again?'
Will ye no come back again?
Will ye no come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no come back again?"

Overcome by the surge of feeling called up by this tender sentiment, Ronald turned aside, and leaning over the taffrail wept natural and holy tears.

"Softly, laddie, softly," said his companion, laying his hand upon his shoulder, "dinna greet sae. At ony rate, if our bonnie Charlie is awa' past return, he's

'Safely ower the friendly main,'

friendly, because though he may not come back to us, it'll carry us ower to him, an' they dinna greet i' the land o' the leal."

At this moment his lordship perceived Sandy Muir engaged in some trifling duty near by, and the thought occurred to him that honest Sandy's vigorous faith and hope might act as a tonic to Ronald's drooping and saddened spirits.

"Well, Sandy, my man," he said, "here's Honolulu at long last. How do you feel about our business now?"

Sandy Muir, though he was doing his best to hide it and to bide his time, was in a perfect fever of excitement and unrest. He, good man, no more doubted now that he should meet his honoured and beloved captain in the streets of Honolulu than that he should know him when he did see him. In Sandy's case it

was not a speculation, a dubiety, an indefinite hope. It was an article of faith such as sustained and possessed the soul of those in the olden time who dared an axestroke on the strength of the protecting amulet around their neck. If he might have followed his bent, he would have left the yacht that night and at once have proceeded on his quest. He would have given neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids until he had found him whom his soul loved, and who was to him his loadstone, his pole-star, his one human hope.

In response to his lordship's question, Sandy came forward, touched his uncovered locks, and said—

"I feels just the same, my lord, as I've felt all along, only a bit more eagerlike, an' if Captain Allan 'll give me leave, I'd like to go ashore. I want to find *him*, an' he's waitin' somewheres ready to be found, somewheres where he can't get out."

"I'm glad to hear you speak so confidently, Sandy. Now that we are come so near, I'm afraid we are as far off as ever—at least poor Mr. M'Leod is. God grant that you may prove a true prophet!"

The sailor turned his eyes on Ronald's sad and troubled face. The honest fellow was touched at the sight of such distress. He drew near to Ronald's side. He spake in tones of calm conviction, and with convincing earnestness.

"Mr. M'Leod, sir, 'scuse the liberty. I'm only a poor ignorant sailor, but I should like to say something to you, if you'll have patience?"

"Say on, Sandy!" said Ronald, "I like to hear."

"I always felt that I should see *him* again, after I lost him, until the day that I was flung like a dead fish on the sands o' Craigmuir. Then, while I was weaker an' more helpless than a baby, by Ziah Quayle's cabin fire, I did lose heart, for I scarcely expected to tread the deck of a ship again. But when I began to mend, Ziah, God bless him for a good Samaritan Christian o' the best sort,—Ziah an' me was talking how strange it was that them as was good for something were drowned outright, an' such poor good-for-nowts as me was saved like by a merrykle, says Ziah Quayle, says he—

"'Sandy, lad, the Lord knows what He's a doin' on, an' seein' as how you've been saved like a merrykle, you're saved for some purpose that He knows on, if you don't.'

"And then I up an' I says, 'That's it, Ziah Quayle, an' I *do* know the purpose, 'cause o' which the Rig couldn't crush me, and the sea couldn't drown me; an' I've known it from that there day to this. But you are a-sayin', Sandy Muir, what *is* the purpose? Mr. M'Leod, sir! You've heard me tell how I was saved from drowning by my captain. Well, while I was still in the water, an' the arm o' the man I tried to murder was keepin' me afloat till the boat reached us, I prayed to God. I prayed there an' then, that some day God would let me save that man, even if I died in doin' of it. Mr. M'Leod, sir! *that time's come, an' I shall save Captain Stallibrass! Then, if God's willin', let me die!*

There was such earnest, such pious faith, such an afflatus, as it were, in the sailor's tones, that Ronald

was fairly staggered. He exchanged rapid glances with Lord Weyburn, and replied—

"God in heaven grant it, Sandy! God in heaven grant it! Though I hope you will live long to rejoice over it together with us all."

So saying, Ronald retired to his berth, more encouraged than he was willing to acknowledge by Sandy Muir's strong and steadfast faith.

"Good-night, Ronald," said Lord Weyburn, who remained on deck; "you know the old Covenanter's stalwart saying, 'Faith fights, trust triumphs, God is where He was.'"

CHAPTER XXVII.

TELLS HOW ZIAH QUAYLE WENT IN SEARCH OF FAIRIN'S, AND WITH WHAT SUCCESS.

When Ziah Quayle parted from his companions in Edinburgh on their return from Weyburn Castle, his feelings, as may be well imagined, were of a very mixed description. He felt the parting with Sandy Muir. The peculiar relationship which existed between them, and the genuine character of the rescued sailor himself, had laid abiding hold on the honest tar.

Then, too, he could not help feeling a sense of disappointment in that he was not permitted to go in quest of the missing captain, and to enjoy just once again "a home on the rolling deep." But, on the other hand, he was delighted, and felt quite a sense of triumph as well as relief, that his errand had been so successful, and that the expedition—deppitation, as he called it—was on its way. And then, when he set his face homeward and thought of the responsibilities at Craigmuir, and the loving welcome he should get from the widow and her darlings, the scales gave a decided turn, his regrets and disappointments kicked the beam, and his gladness came down with quite a bump of victory, which found expression in a similar thump from timber-toe.

"Hurrah!" said he to himself, "it's all plain sailin'.

The business makes headway like a full-rigged clipper i' the trade winds! Blow, breezes, blow! Three cheers for the *Highland Lassie!* an' for the lord as desarves to be a lord; not forgettin' Mister M'Leod, as is all gumption an' grit; an' Sandy Muir, honest comrade, as is heart of oak from rudder to bow-sprit, real ship-shape, copper-bottomed, A 1 at Lloyds!"

As Ziah Quayle gave actual voice to these complimentary cogitations, and in accordance with the fervency of his feelings, was posting away, dot-an'-carry-one, as he used to say, at a rate that made his wooden leg appear a positive gain to locomotion, he arrested the attention of the passers-by. He was brought back to a proper sense of the fitness of things by the urgent request of a beggar, whose petition for a "bawbee" was promptly responded to. Honest Ziah was in a frame of mind just then to give without stint or limit, as an outlet for his own joy and gratitude of heart.

The production of the bawbee reminded him of the well-filled purse which Lord Weyburn had thrust into his hands. That reminded him that he was well able to afford to buy something for the dear bairns who would be sure to prize a fairin', brought by dear Ziah all the way from "Edinbro toon." Ziah found himself near the railway station, for he meant to ride a good spell on his homeward way. The thought of the fairin', however, made him spin round on his wooden leg again and retrace his steps in search of a toy shop.

By and by he was standing before a big window in which was spread and hung everything that could charm the eye and captivate the heart of children of

all ages. Ziah was in a quandary. He stood oppressed and dazed by the magnitude of the field of choice. With timber-toe thrust well forward, now lifting his glazed hat and rubbing his short cut grey hair, now holding his chin between the finger and thumb of one hand, while he pointed at various objects of interest with the other, Ziah was himself a study for a painter, and an object of interest and delight to the gamins of the street. Some of these appealed to his benevolence, and suggested the wholesale purchase of tops, taws, kites, skipping-ropes, *et cetera, pro bono publico.*

It is not improbable that their importunity would have been rewarded, for, as I have said, Ziah was in a remarkably amiable mood. But his eye was suddenly attracted by a large doll with rosy cheeks, curly flaxen hair, and a pair of big blue eyes.

"That's for Trixie, God bless her!" exclaimed the delighted tar, and timber-toe thumped across the threshold, followed by the laughter of admiring youngsters, who echoed, "That's for Trixie, God bless her!" in paroxysms of delight.

"How much for that there doll, Missus?" inquired Ziah, pointing to the coveted prize.

The shopwoman brought it out of the window, and holding it before him, applied her thumb to some secret apparatus. Immediately Dolly shut its eyes and then opened them again, emitting at the same time a squeak from its abdominal regions that sent timber-toe three thumps backwards in astonishment.

"Handspikes an' bobstays!" cried Ziah. "Bless my soul, Missus, is the thing alive?"

The courteous shopwoman proceeded with a smile to explain the mystery, and as the price just then was a matter of comparative unimportance, the mysterious maiden was laid on one side, until Ziah had decided upon a present for Georgie to keep it company.

This, however, threatened to be a much more difficult matter, and business hung fire for a long time. Article after article was produced, but none of them seemed to meet the requirements of the case. At last the shopwoman produced a humming-top of unusual dimensions, and brilliantly adorned with circles including all the colours of the rainbow.

"There, sir!" quoth the saleswoman, "a boy can't possibly have a nicer present given to him than that."

"Why, what is it for?" said Ziah, whose acquaintance with the top family was confined to the old original and unsophisticated whipping-top, or its comrade of similar shape and size with a steel prod in it on which to perform its gyrations. "It's almost as fine as a newly gilded figurehead an' just about as sarviceable."

"Oh no!" said his amused instructress, "look here!"

Straightway she wound up the instrument, and then, with the skill of a practised hand, she sent it spinning at the top of its bent on the smooth surface of the counter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Ziah as his eye followed its eccentric movements to and fro along the counter. "There it goes! In an' out an' round about like a Mother Carey's chicken! with all the colours of a dying dolphin', an' a bum, bum, bum, like the waves agin

Craigmuir Neb! Tickle it up again, Missus," said Ziah when the top began to lapse into the 'sleepy' state, "it's as good as a raree show! How much for the bum-bum, ma'am? That'll suit Georgie to a T."

The purchase was soon completed; the two fairin's were wrapped carefully in brown paper, and properly secured with strong twine. Then the proud Ziah marched away in triumph, anxious only to reach Craigmuir as soon as might be and to repair to The Cottage, and "share the pleasant feast of sweet surprise."

Fortunately for Ziah, his arrival at the railway station was timely, and in a little while he was on his way to Craigmuir with his fairin's held and guarded carefully on his knee. At the station nearest to the village of Craigmuir, to which place the iron-horse had not yet arrived, Ziah was enabled to beg a ride in a miller's cart, which brought him in safety to his own door.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FAIRIN'S GIVE ZIAH QUAYLE MUCH ANXIETY AND THE BAIRNS MUCH DELIGHT.

When Ziah Quayle found himself once again in his snug little cabin he felt a sense of rest and satisfaction that increased his content at having to forego the intended voyage to the Southern Seas. It seemed to dawn upon him that he was growing older, and that he had reason to thank God for such a quiet and comfortable anchorage.

As he bustled about his household duties, lighting the fire and preparing himself a special cup of tea, "real treble X," he said, "by way of a refresher, an' a good deal better than a double allowance of grog," he hummed the lines

> "Home, sweet, sweet home.
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

His evening meal being well over, the old sailor prepared to take his prizes to the Cottage. It suddenly came into his mind, however, that he had not made himself familiar with the management of their machinery, and might not be able to instruct his favourites in the art and mystery of both. So he proceeded at once to make the experiment. For a long time his big broad thumb failed to press the spring which gave the blue-eyed doll its peculiar powers. Ziah

was tortured with the fear that he had broken it in transit, and his alarm was great. He tried again. Yes, it was all right! The eyes first shut and then opened, and then out came the baby's squeak! The relief was tremendous, Ziah laughed and listened and laughed again till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Here's a go!" said Ziah. "I've a good mind to open the door an' let the neighbours hear; they'll think I've a baby in the house," and the bare idea so tickled him that he thumped timber-toe on the floor in glee.

The humming-top was then produced, and that presented even greater difficulties than the blue-eyed maiden. That really did require a little science. Ziah's unskilled fingers either wound the string too tightly, or he forgot to pass it through the hole, or he failed to hold it firmly on the table. Be it how it might, the top went reeling and sprawling and would neither spin nor hum. Again his spirits went down to zero. Then he set himself again to the task with care; forehead knit, teeth set on nether lip, he proceeded tightly to wind the magic string. With one hand he held the wilful thing firmly on the table; with the other he pulled the string quickly. It succeeded this time with a vengeance, went off at express speed, and on the old deal-table, which itself stood on the hollow floor, set up such a loud and sonorous boom that Ziah turned frightened at his own temerity. He caught up the noisy machine in mid-career, and holding it with both hands exclaimed, "Drop your bobbery, you howlin' warment! Folks 'll think I've set up a grist mill in the backyard. Or they'll think its Fee-

fo-fum with his 'I'll grind his bones to make my bread!'"

Packing up his purchases once more, Ziah lost no time in taking them to their destination; and if ever mortal man was made happy by warmth of welcome, by the grateful words and looks that came out of youthful lips and eyes, that man was Ziah Quayle on that ever-to-be-remembered night.

The children detected the familiar thud of timber-toe upon the sloping pathway long before he had gained the level of the garden gate.

"O mamma! dear Ziah's coming!" quoth Georgie, bounding from his seat, Trixie following and screaming her welcome that it might at least arrive as soon as Georgie's which was borne on nimbler feet. Nor could Mrs. Stallibrass restrain her impatience or defer her greeting until Ziah was within doors. She was at the garden gate and held it open for him. The sun was just dipping in the west, had dipped, indeed, but its red and slanting beams still lingered on the heather, gave clouds above and tree and shrub below a roseate hue, and seemed to tinge in the same way the young widow's face and hair. Honest Ziah saw, not only that she was comely and beautiful, but that there was a lovelier and heavenlier light upon her quiet features than he had ever seen before. Patience was having its perfect work. Although Georgie was clinging to his knee, and Trixie was riding on his shoulder, and both were clamorous in their lengthy greeting, Ziah could see this, and for this gave thanks to God.

"The children give you hearty welcome, dear friend,

but not warmer than their mother does. I am glad and grateful to see you home again."

"Thank you, ma'am, an' the same to you," said Ziah.

There was not much of it, and what there was didn't seem particularly appropriate. But the fact was that Ziah's heart was full; so full that it swelled up into his vocal organs and gave him warning that he had better mean the thanks he could not speak. It was good enough to read, however, in every line of his rough, bronzed face, in every twinkle of his glistening eyes, in every movement of his tall, ungainly frame.

Ziah was speedily able to make a diversion in his own favour, by proceeding slowly and deliberately to open the parcel. The children eyed him with curiosity, suspicion, anticipation, certainty, all following by degrees the expanding index of his own face. Then, in possession, they realised the children's paradise, and after sundry lengthened ohs and kissings, were permitted to go and test their new treasures to their hearts' content.

Ziah followed them into the kitchen, gave hearty greeting to Elspie, and then pulling Georgie to his side and taking Beatrice on his knee, he said—

"Now, my dears, can you tell me what I asked you to say every mornin' an' every evenin' at the end of your prayers?"

"Yes, dear Ziah," said Trixie, "and us have said it all the time."

"Let me hear you say it now," said Ziah. Trixie clasped her hands in her usual fashion as at prayer time, and repeated slowly, and softly as if conscious of its importance—

"And, O God, help dear Ziah to do what he wants to do for us and for dear mamma, for Christ's sake. Amen!"

Then a sudden light flashed in upon the little maiden.

"Oh, dear Ziah!" said she, "I *am* so glad. God has gone and been and done it, and you've brought Georgie his hummlin top an' me my doll!"

"Yes, my darlin'," said Ziah tenderly, "God has gone an' been an' done some of it. But Trixie must keep on a-sayin' of it! cause Ziah hopes that there's something more to follow by and by."

"Something for mamma?" inquired the little maiden.

Ziah was rather taken aback at this unexpected home-thrust, but he thought he might safely agree.

"Yes," said he, "something for mamma, an' for my little Trixie, and for Georgie too."

Both the children promised to keep the original compact, and honest Ziah, glad at heart and hopeful, returned to the sitting-room, bade the widow good-night, and then sauntered homeward to his cabin, asking God that in His own good time the "something more to follow" might come to brighten the cottage hearth and to gladden the three hearts that he loved best in all the world.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TELLS HOW LORD WEYBURN AND RONALD M'LEOD MADE AN EXCURSION TO FLETCHER'S FARM.

No sooner did the sun show its red disc above the sea line, and begin to pour out its flood of light upon the tropic scene, than Sandy Muir, with full permission of Captain Allan, leaped from the deck of the *Highland Lassie* into the boat which was to be devoted to his service, cast off without a moment's delay, and with a heart beating high with hope and holy purpose, set off on his search after *him*.

Lord Weyburn and Ronald would gladly have accompanied him, and would have been contented on this errand to serve under him; but they saw that the sailor's whole soul was set upon paying something of his debt of gratitude, and of saving the lost Captain as he himself had been saved on one never-to-be-forgotten day in these very seas. They could and did appreciate his reasons, and determined to leave him to follow his own devices.

Meanwhile they pursued their own inquiries in a thoroughly careful and systematic way. The various consuls were duly informed of their errand; the harbour and custom-house authorities, the clergy and the police were all enlisted in the search; and so far as mere machinery can go, and it cannot go far in especial

cases outside routine, all was done that could be done to aid their great design.

Lord Weyburn, with a wise and thoughtful prudence, justly fearing that the sickness which rises from hope deferred would prove too great a strain for the sensitive Ronald, whose constitution was anything but strong, arranged for several excursions into the interior of the island as well as around the coast. He had set agents to work to make every possible inquiry in the neighbouring islands of the group, and wisely judged that they were likely to be more effective than either Ronald or himself.

And so Ronald was taken to see the marvellous volcano of Kilauea, which is unquestionably one of the most wonderful and astounding of the many natural wonders in this wondrous world of ours. Our home idea of a volcano presupposes a mountain large or small, an elevated cone, out of which the ashes, smoke, and lava are vomited forth. But here at Kilauea there is a flaming lake three miles across, which has waves and storms and billows breaking on the shore, just like a sea, only this is literally a sea of molten fire. The natives call it the Hale-mau-mau, or House of Everlasting Fire, and in their mythology the Goddess Pèlè and her fiery angels have here their home and empire. Ronald and his companion were lost in astonishment and awe at this great sight.

"Surely this is no faint image of the bottomless pit, as imagined by mediæval painters and poets," said Ronald in a half whisper.

"I don't think that ever Dante drew such a picture," said Lord Weyburn. "Milton talks of the 'burning

marl,' but this is an ocean, a storm-lashed sea of liquid fire!"

It was an awful sight! the shore line of lava looked like blood compared with the black cliff above it; a cascade of fire was playing in the centre of the lake, boiling up and rolling down, bubbling, tossing up jets of molten lava, and scattering fiery spray all around; then for a few moments it subsided, and the lake crusted over cooling on the top, a thin crust of grey and black; then it suddenly spouted up like a new geyser forty feet high, a colossal fountain of fire, and dashing up red billows against the cliffs with a sound like surf on a rocky shore!

"Come away," said Ronald to his companion, "come away. I shall go mad if I look into it any more. To me it is the very lake of perdition!"

Lord Weyburn, who had been gazing on it in a long unbroken silence, as if entranced, was glad to have the awful charm broken, and turned away from the grandly awful sight, saying—

"A new glory and a new terror has been added to the earth."

It was an indescribable relief when they found themselves once again in the beautiful woodland scenery which is found to perfection in these sumptuous islands. The luxurious palm with its stately frondage, spreading its feathery beauty everywhere, the broad and majestic bread-fruit tree, and other arborescent glories, all mingled with flowers and shrubs of every graceful hue and form, with here and there vistas of the calm blue sea, led Ronald to say at the close of that particular excursion—

"Surely we have seen both hell and heaven to-day."

"And yet," said Lord Weyburn, "of both it is true, 'Great and marvellous are Thy works, O God! in wisdom hast Thou made them all.'"

And all the while and everywhere, Lord Weyburn used a gentle compulsion over Ronald in the matter of sketching, and the artist's portfolios were filled with memorials of their travel, for subsequent service in the *atelier* of The Hermitage. Yet despite the constant change of scene, and the wholesome occupation of mind, both Ronald and Lord Weyburn were ever on the alert for news or view of the missing captain, who still remained undiscovered and still made no sign.

One morning, as Ronald was taking from his traveling trunk a change of dress, he happened to take up a loose shooting jacket, which he had worn in Edinburgh while he was making his rapid preparations for the voyage, when a letter slipped out of his pocket and fell on the cabin floor.

Ronald picked it up and read the following address:

"Roderick Fletcher, Esq., Fletcher's Farm, Kayulu, Hawaii."

In a moment he remembered that a brother artist in Edinburgh had given him that letter two or three days before he sailed, as an introduction to a wealthy merchant who resided on the island, and who was a near relative of the writer. It was suggested at the breakfast table that Fletcher's Farm should be visited without delay.

On inquiry in the town they discovered that the place was situated some seven or ten miles from

Honolulu, the road thither lying over an elevated mountain pass. The mansion and grounds bearing this unassuming name were said to be of extraordinary beauty, that the house stood on a wooded slope overlooking a land-locked bay, and that its wealthy and much-respected owner kept open house for visitors.

They were recommended to proceed thither in the *Highland Lassie*, as by that means they would not only avoid the tedious and difficult mountain pass, but would see the finest stretch of coast line on the island, and could drop anchor at a landing stage at the foot of Fletcher's Farm itself. The only possible objection to this course was the absence and the uncertain movements of Sandy Muir. But as that ardent seeker had already spent more than one night ashore in the interests of his absorbing mission, instructions were left for his guidance if he did turn up at the harbour stairs, and then the *Highland Lassie* at once stood out to sea.

It was near the close of day when the yacht, after a brief and pleasant voyage, sailed into the small sequestered bay of Kayulu, and dropped its anchor by a little ornamental landing stage at the foot of a thickly wooded slope, the foliage of which actually dipped into the blue waters that rippled at its base. Ascending a winding path through the woods, and passing through a series of charming woodland glades, Lord Weyburn and Ronald found themselves at last on a broad plateau beautifully laid out with tree and shrub and flower; and at the further side was a large, low mansion, surrounded by a verandah on the ground floor, and a balcony above, both which, as well as the

house itself, were covered with luxuriant creepers and climbing flowers, bright with leaf and blossom. It was like a patch out of fairyland. Our two travellers stood in silent admiration for a while, and then began to cross the sward in the direction of the house. They perceived three men standing by the central porch. One of them, catching sight of the new comers, with a cry of surprise and delight ran forward to meet them.

"Why, it's Sandy Muir!" said Ronald in astonishment.

"He and no other!" cried Lord Weyburn. "My God! Ronald! be prepared, for there is the very glow of victory on his face!"

The words had scarcely left his lips when Sandy Muir rushed forward, bright, happy, exultant, and seizing Ronald by the hand with both his own, exclaimed:

"I'VE FOUND HIM!!"

CHAPTER XXX.

SANDY MUIR MAKES FIRST AN IMPRESSION AND THEN A GRAND DISCOVERY.

SANDY MUIR had pursued his own course steadily and persistently. His business was to examine individual faces, for he, simple soul, held to a literal fulfilment of his dream, and expected to meet his captain in the street. Not seldom his look was too direct, and too long continued, amounting to a stare which might have got Sandy into trouble, and was more than once resented. But there was such honesty in his look, such a readiness to apologise, and withal such sadness in his eye at the new disappointment, that all anger was disarmed. More than once or twice his sanguine temperament had misled him: for where he saw any even the most distant resemblance to memory's true portrait of *him*, he would argue himself into the belief that he had found his man, and track him or address him, only to find out that he was wrong again.

It was weary, weary work; worse than the proverbial task of seeking a needle in a bottle of hay, for, after all, there was no absolute certainty that the needle was there at all. As day after day passed by, and Sandy returned to the yacht beneath the silent stars, which looked in pity on him but could tell no secrets, he began to carry his despondency in his countenance,

only to shake it off, however, and to go forth with hopes fresh kindled at the dawning of a new day, to pursue his daily stroll through all the tree-embowered streets of Honolulu.

On one occasion he had pursued his usual course of search, and as usual with no success until noon arrived. Then he was glad to turn into a quiet hostel, for he was both faint and hungry. It was not his first visit there, and the host, a mercurial little Frenchman, recognised him, and knowing something of his errand, inquired after his measure of success. Sandy could only shake his head, mute sign well understood. The Frenchman could only speak a little broken English, very much broken. He shrugged his shoulders, and gave Sandy to understand that it was a vain and useless quest.

"Certainement! It is one ver deefeecult ting! It is one, vat you call chasse of de goose dat is quite vild. De capitaine vidout any doubt is gone for what you call feed de poissons."

"Poisoned!" quoth Sandy, "what makes you say that?"

"Non, non, you no ondarestand"——

At this point in the conversation, which was evidently full of "deefeeculties," a tall, gaunt, keen-featured Yankee came in; they are running the Scotchman hard in the matter of ubiquity, and to him the landlord proceeded to appeal for an endorsement of his own oddly expressed opinion. Much to his surprise the new comer replied in a peculiar nasal drawl—

"Wal, now, I'm none so sartin abeout that. I guess there's a sight more onlikelier things than that goin'

on between this an Jericho. I wanted to find that noble Britisher, Lord What's-his-name, but I find he's cleared out o' this an' ta'en that splendacious yacht of his along with him. I say, Britisher," he continued, turning to Sandy Muir, "kin you tell me ef his lordship ez fairly made his tracks from these parts for good an' all?"

Of course the news of Lord Weyburn's departure came on Sandy as a surprise, but he concluded that he had only gone for a short cruise, and he was quite clear that the *Highland Lassie* would drop anchor in port again. But the American had evidently some information to impart, and Sandy dearly wanted to get at it. So he replied with more astuteness than usual—

"Lord Weyburn goes here an' goes there much as the fit an' the fancy moves him, an' there's no knowin' what he'll be up to next. But he has left me to make inquiries for him, an' if you can tell me anything about *him*, I mean him as Lord Weyburn wants to find, it'll be the kindest thing you ever did in your life."

"Wal, now," said the true-born son of the stars and stripes, "I reckon that's raythor a wildish an' venturesome guess o' yours. I won't say as I'm altogether as soft an' amiable as melted butter exactly, but I hev done a few kindly turns in my time. But abeout this here business now. Isn't there a *re*-ward offered for information?"

Poor Sandy was getting excited. He felt that he must have the news or choke. He rose from his seat and sat down directly opposite the tantalising stranger.

"Listen to me, sir," said Sandy, in a voice that

trembled with fervour, and fixing his honest eyes on the Yankee's face, straightway he poured out all his heart before him. He told him his own story from beginning to end as well as he could for sobs, which only made the deliverance more eloquent. He concluded by saying in a sort of despair—

"Oh, sir, I must find my captain, or I shall die!"

The American jumped to his feet, dashed the back of his hand swiftly across his eyes, as if ashamed of the signals there, and said—

"Give us a grip o' your flipper, comrade. Confound the *re*-ward! who cares a darned cent for it? You go to Fletcher's Farm, a good ten mile out of this, across the Rahita Pass. There's a poor chap there that the guv'nor picked up out o' the ocean. It may be the man you want, or it may be not, but I hope to God it is. There! Give us another grip, Britisher. Let me hear you call me 'Friend.' I'd rayther hear it out o' your lips than harp, sackbut and dulcimer, an' all kinds o' music!"

"Friend, mate? Ay, ay, you are my friend," said grateful Sandy, "an' may God's marcy be sweet to you every day o' your life."

So saying the sailor paid his score and departed, setting his face to the Rahita Pass and to Fletcher's Farm as steadfastly as ever Moses did to the Promised Land. Time and distance never entered into his calculation; as for weariness, he could have scaled the Himalayas or the Andes on the strength of a hope that John Stallibrass was waiting for him at the top.

He had reached the highest point of the pass and had sat him down to rest a little on a large boulder

by the wayside. He took off his hat to enjoy the mountain breeze that was blowing cool and fresh. He saw approaching him a tall man with a big brown beard and sun-browned features, beneath whose broad straw hat he recognised the face of an Englishman. He seemed to walk with a slow and listless gait, and as he passed he lifted a pair of kindly grey eyes on the uncovered sailor, eyes that had a strange, unnatural, far-away look in them, eyes which set Sandy Muir's heart a throbbing and brought him quickly to his feet.

The stranger had also uncovered, and was standing before the sailor rubbing his forehead, thrusting his fingers excitedly through his hair, and then passing his fingers over his eyes as if trying to get rid of a dimness there, and all the while looking at Sandy without a word. Poor Sandy restrained himself, he had so often jumped to wrong conclusions.

"Can you tell me how much farther it is to Fletcher's Farm?" said Sandy.

"It will take you an hour to walk there; you go double speed down hill," said the stranger, with a faint smile.

But long before the sentence was completed the last vestige of doubt had left the sailor's mind. *That* was the voice that said, "I'll save you that you may live to be a better man," when the red knife was in his belt. He rushed forward, fell at the stranger's feet, clasped him round the legs, rose up again and seized him by both hands, while tears rained down his cheeks, and all the while he cried—

"Oh, my captain! my captain! Oh, my friend! My all but God, for you stood in the stead of God to me,

I've found you! I've found you! Oh that I could shout, shout across the sea, 'Ziah Quayle! I've found him! I've found him, an' my dream's come true!'"

How much longer Sandy Muir might have gone on in the same strain I cannot tell, but he was suddenly brought to a standstill by John Stallibrass, for it was he in very deed and of a truth. He laid a firm strong hand on Sandy's shoulder, fixed his grey eyes—eyes with an uncanny gleam in them—on Sandy's face, and said slowly but intensely and solemnly—

"Your dreams! That is what I want to know. That is what I cannot get to know. I have dreams. Your face comes in my dreams. And in my dreams I cry aloud to yours and to other faces 'Who are you? For God's sake, tell me who you are.' And then night and silence dark and deep as hell comes down. And the good God won't tell me. You will, won't you? Yours is one of my dream faces. Man! tell me, who are you?"

Oh, it was pitiful! The big sweat drops stood upon his brow; his fine features quivered with surprise, and the hand on the sailor's shoulder trembled until Sandy trembled too.

"I'm Sandy Muir, my captain. Sandy Muir, whom you saved from drowning when he tried to stab you to the heart. Oh, my captain," he cried in plaintive tones, and with wailing in his voice, "Surely, surely you remember Sandy Muir!"

His hand left the sailor's shoulder, his noble head sank upon the breast, and his voice, the well-remembered voice, sank into a weary monotone that had no note of hope in it as he said—

"No; I don't remember. There's a mistake somewhere; I'll ask Bella." And so saying he turned away.

Poor Sandy Muir! That "No," so sad, so hopeless, fell on his ear like a knell, and seemed to turn his blood to ice. "No, no, my captain, don't go away!" he said humbly, pleadingly, like the petitioning of a beggar. "Let me go with you to your home!"

"Certainly," said John Stallibrass with his olden kindly smile. "You will be heartily welcome there." And much to Sandy Muir's astonishment, he turned and conducted him direct to Fletcher's Farm! They were met at the gate by Mr. Fletcher himself, who gave the sailor a hearty welcome. He noted that this pleased John Stallibrass, and said—

"Thank you, John, for bringing me a guest."

CHAPTER XXXI.

JOHN STALLIBRASS IS IN PRISON, BUT HE IS FAVOURED WITH GENTLE JAILORS.

"I've found him!"

Both Ronald M'Leod and Lord Weyburn had latent unbelief enough to receive the news in silence, and to wonder whether the sickness of hope deferred in the agitated sailor had not brought dementia, and palmed off upon his brain as a reality what he longed so ardently should be true.

It was but a passing doubt, however. There was no insanity in Sandy's exultant tone, no dementia on his radiant face, no craze in his flashing eye, as he repeated the words, "I have found the Captain! And my dream's come true!"

"Thank God!" said Ronald.

"Yes, thank God!" echoed Lord Weyburn.

They had nothing more to say. Nothing more needed to be said. Nothing more just then was worth saying. The ordinary questions, How? When? Where? were but trifles in comparison. The one great, grand fact, the fact that summed up all and included all, and left the mind without room for another, was the fact that Honest John Stallibrass was found?

Mr. Fletcher, who was beginning to have his own fears as to Sandy's Muir's sanity, had speedily followed him across the lawn, and bade the new comers welcome

to Fletcher's Farm. The ceremony of introduction is neither very formal nor very lengthy among Britons who meet in this fashion at the furthest corners of the earth. The letter presented by Ronald was much appreciated as an epistle from a friend, but as a card of introduction it was no more needed than a mandate from Prester John.

"I'll send for your traps," said the host as soon as he had ascertained that the yacht was in the bay lying snug at anchor beneath the arching trees that lined it. You will give me a few days to show you the beauties of Fletcher's Farm. The native name for it is Oolinalu, which means a charm, or charming, and I venture to say that the name is not truer of any spot in all the islands of the South Pacific.

"First of all," said Ronald, turning to Sandy, "I must see my brother."

"Your brother! Is that true?" said Mr. Fletcher. "Then that's the best news I've heard for many a day. Poor John! He told us that his name was John. When we asked him for his other name the dear fellow slowly said he hadn't one. So we call him John Waife. He'll come," he continued speaking to Sandy, "if you'll say, 'John, you're wanted.'"

In a few moments John Stallibrass appeared with Sandy, to whom he had evidently taken a great fancy, by his side. Ronald's first impression was that Sandy had been self-deceived. There was little of the original Honest John in the spare and somewhat stooping figure and the wan and melancholy face before him. The latter, as when Sandy first saw him, was shadowed by the broad straw hat. At the sight

of Ronald, again he doffed it, and ran his fingers excitedly through his hair, as his dull, far-away grey eyes were fixed on his brother-in-law.

"That's another!" he said helplessly, "another of the faces that come to me in my dreams." At the sight of his grey eyes, and especially at the sound of his clear silvery voice, Ronald's heart beat fast. Taking his two hands in his, he said—

"O John! my brother! my dearest brother! Don't you remember Ronald, Ronnie, you know, your Maggie's brother."

"You must be under some mistake," he answered in quiet tones. "I once, nay, I have often seen a face like yours—in my dreams." And then he smiled and said, "I like your face."

A dazed and startled look came into his eyes as he said—

"Mr. Fletcher, something tells me I'm going to have a blow again; may I go?"

"Yes, John, go and lie down in your room, and get a little sleep."

He lingered a little, and again offering his hand to Ronald, he smiled as he said, "I like your face!"

Ronald could only grasp it in silence, and answer by unbidden tears.

Then, turning to Sandy Muir, John laid his hand upon his sailor's jacket, as if he liked to feel it, and said with an appealing look—

"Will you come with me?"

It was evident that there was some invisible link between these two. Sandy's lip quivered to see his captain in such a plight, and yet felt a strange joy at

the preference so evidently displayed. The two retired, and when John Stallibrass flung himself upon his bed, he placed Sandy's cool hand upon his brow. So the sailor sat by his captain's side, sat and watched, and prayed, while the poor victim of some mysterious fate sank into quiet and peaceful sleep. "He is in prison," said Sandy to himself, as the big tears stole silently down his tanned and rugged cheeks, "My captain's in prison, an' he can't get out!"

As the three others sauntered towards the porch, Lord Weyburn, who had silently watched the touching scene, was greatly moved.

"I should like to know," said he, "what has happened to the captain to cause so sad a change."

"I can tell your lordship all about it," said Mr. Fletcher; "but first let me introduce you to my wife and sister, and make you free of my domestic circle."

The room into which they entered was large and lofty, and well, even sumptuously furnished, and with especial regard to the requirements of a tropical climate.

Mrs. Fletcher, who was sitting with a book in her hand by an open window, came forward to give them hearty welcome. She was a short, stout, pleasant-looking lady of about five-and-forty, with plentiful dark hair, faintly streaked with silver and partially hid beneath quiet head-gear, half-cap, half-bow; and her whole dress was of that quiet and seemly character that becomes a matron in her own home.

She was a little flattered at the mention of Lord Weyburn's name, for a nobleman was a sort of *rara avis* at Fletcher's Farm, and her acquaintance with

rank and dignity was but limited. His lordship put her at her ease by a sentence or two, and then she proceeded to summon her young sister. Miss Strachan, or Bella, as her sister called her, entered the room through the open window. She appeared in a charming arrangement of pink and white, with a large sun-bonnet on her chestnut curls, and a bunch of fragrant blossoms in her hand. She might be any age from twenty to thirty, and *was* twenty-seven. Ronald's artistic eye was taken captive, and Lord Weyburn, for once, lost all loquacity, and looked mute admiration and surprise. His lordship was amused to observe the quiet twinkle in her eye, as she made him a very deferential bow, for it said as plain as plain could be—

"Oh, a lord, are you? I wonder whether you are any the better or the worse for that."

It was explained that a son and daughter constituted the rest of Mr. Fletcher's household, but that they were both in Europe, the son at Cambridge, and the daughter in Paris, perfecting their education.

"And now," said Mr. Fletcher, "you have half an hour or so to dress for dinner. Kindly remember that Fletcher's Farm is Liberty Hall, and that the more freely you honour its title the more you will contribute to our pleasure and satisfaction."

So saying, the host summoned a negro footman, who took the visitors to their pleasant quarters, and they were left free to follow their own devices until the gong should summon them to dinner.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD WEYBURN GIVES A QUOTATION; BELLA STRACHAN MAKES AN ATTACK.

Mr. Fletcher, like most of the characters in this most veracious chronicle, hailed from Bonnie Scotland. His face told that fact clearly, and his fund of quiet humour was all but proof positive of the same. His short and stubbly iron-grey hair, his moustache and beard of similar hue and cropped almost as short, his arched eyebrows, and his keen brown eyes, and especially his plentiful allowance of nose, which was allowed a very moderate allowance of snuff, all proclaimed the Scot, the keen man of business, the humourist, and the genial companion and friend.

"What a noble-looking and pleasant man his lordship is," said Mrs. Fletcher, after their guests had disappeared.

"Handsome is that handsome does," said downright Bella, shaking her curls. "It will take a little time to prove his quality. *I* like the artist. I hope he isn't married or engaged, or"——

"You'll be hiding a Cupid in your curls, eh, Bella, to shoot fatal arrows at him on the sly?" said her brother-in-law. "I shall have to come to his rescue."

"Oh, no, indeed," said Bella, "I shall carry on the warfare in the open; and if I fail in fair fight, the more he'll have to be pitied for losing such a prize. I

shall get my portfolio ready for his inspection, by way of a first attack."

"And I," said Mr. Fletcher, "shall sing,

"'I know a maiden fair to see,
Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
Beware!'"

"And if I do, Master Roderick," said Bella, severely, "I'll pull your hair and tweak your nose, and otherwise harry you until you cry quarter. Don't you poach on my preserves, sir, especially as you can't bag the game after you have brought it down. Emily, put your marital embargo on your husband"——

"Nay, nay, not I," said Mrs. Fletcher, laughing. "He's your guardian, you know."

"Well, does that mean that he's to guard me from getting a husband, I should like to know? Out on thee for a fause traitor! But by my halidom, I'll have my revenge on both of ye! So here goes for a conquest and a captive, and you'll vainly cry, 'Let go the painter!'" So saying, the merry maiden retired to martial all her forces at the mirror, followed by Mr. Fletcher's loud, "Ha, ha!"

"And she has hair of golden hue,
Take care!
And what she says, it is not true,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not, she's fooling thee!"

When the little party gathered round the dinner table, Bella gave an arch look at her brother as she seated herself by Ronald's side, though Lord Weyburn had ostentatiously placed a chair in readiness for her.

There was no question that the young lady had contrived to clothe herself with additional charms, and was quite piquant and attractive enough to be as dangerous an antagonist as ever shook curls at a lover, or shot side glances out of perilous eyes.

"And so you know my artistic relative, Dave Mackay?" said the host during the process of the meal, and wickedly interrupting an animated conversation between Ronald and his fair neighbour.

"Oh yes," said Ronald in reply, "I know him well. "He and I have chummed together a good deal on sketching tours both at home and on the Continent, and a hearty good fellow he is. And besides, Mrs. Mackay and Agnes are sworn friends."

"Who is Agnes, may I ask?" said Mr. Fletcher with a delicious twinkle in his eye, which was twinkled off at Miss Bella, and all for her special behoof.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Ronald, innocently enough, and with an ingenuous blush, "Agnes is my wife. God bless her!"

"Checkmate!" Mr. Fletcher did not say it right out. He only formed the motion with his lips; and two bright little telegrams were also interchanged between Mrs. Fletcher and the discomfited Amazon, who, in her tilting process, had so soon come to grief. Her fall did not seem to hurt her much, however, for she quietly said—

"That's right, Mr. M'Leod, that's right. It is very clear from that sentence that God has blest her. Happy woman! Oh dear me! How easy the tenth commandment seems to break! Oh why, I wonder, are the good gifts of Providence so partially bestowed?

or perhaps I should say, why are some of us not worthy of a better fate?"

Whereupon followed a little circular ripple of laughter from all parties, which left Bella proud possessor of the field. She had not taken count of Lord Weyburn, however, who had hitherto been remarkably taciturn. He gave matters decidedly a new turn by saying in tones of almost ludicrous earnestness—

> "'Oh wad some power the giftie gie us,
> To see ourselves as ithers see us.'

I shan't pursue the quotation any further, Miss Strachan, for that is the only portion that applies."

The words were barely out of his mouth before his impulsive lordship realised himself the direct and unmistakeable tendency of the quotation. Nobleman and peer of the realm though he was, indurated traveller, cosmopolitan man of the world into the bargain, he lost his self-control. He blushed like a school-girl with a crimson that was only rivalled by the tints incarnadine of the red, red rose, such as suffused Miss Bella's rosy face. Mr. Fletcher with characteristic aptness and promptitude came to the rescue.

"Yes," he said, "that's a kindly thought of yours, my lord, for Mrs. M'Leod. I do not doubt it would add largely to her consolations in and her compensations for her husband's absence, if she could see herself as he sees her with that benediction on his lips."

Miss Bella looked her thanks for the timely *ruse*, and it was clear that there was now a truce between these two. Lord Weyburn thought his host, just then, one of the cleverest fellows he had ever met with, and

mentally put him on his list of friends. "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

Ronald admired the aptitude and wit of that diversion, but none the less he said to himself with a quiet chuckle, for his lordship had always boasted of being adamant to the charms of the gentler and more winsome sex—

"You are hard hit, my lord, and for some little time to come the *Highland Lassie* will be laid up in ordinary, after this voyage is over, or I'm very much mistaken."

Lord Weyburn soon recovered himself, and impelled by the necessity of re-asserting himself, he began to narrate incidents of his own travel; and as he had a copious supply of this material, and a copious flow of language wherewith to deal with it, and as the other "chief speaker," Miss Bella herself, had received her *quietus*, his lordship had free course. It is but fair to the young lady to say, that she was or seemed to be a most attentive listener, though whether she did not think of something else occasionally this deponent dare not with confidence affirm.

After dinner the gentlemen retired into the smoking room, itself a luxurious domain. As soon as his visitors' cigars were lighted, Mr. Fletcher said—

"Now, then, I can tell you, without fear of interruption, all I know about my unfortunate friend, John Waife."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. FLETCHER TELLS HOW JOHN STALLIBRASS WAS RESCUED, AND HOW HE CAME TO BE IN PRISON.

"I FEAR my brother's mind is irretrievably affected," said Ronald, in an inquiring tone, as Mr. Fletcher was preparing to commence his narrative.

"Not, not irretrievably," said the host emphatically. "There has been a steady improvement in his mental condition almost from the first. Indeed, strictly speaking, I can scarcely think that his mind, as to its sanity and its thinking power, is affected at all. He is as apt and as capable, I should say, as he ever was in the planning and performing of anything that does not depend upon his remembrance of previous personal events. So far as the past is concerned, and up to the time I found him, his memory, so far as affects his own history, is, not totally, but almost totally gone. You see he has a dream-like acquaintance with your face, and also with that of Sandy Muir. He remembers that his name is John too, though, strange to say, his surname has gone from him. Ever since he has been residing with me, at least ever since his physical health has been improving, for he was all but dead, there has been a gradual re-development of mind. It is very slow, *very;* but at any rate, there is never any sign or symptom of relapse. What he gets he keeps, but we have

not been able to link him with his past at all. But let me tell you the whole story how he comes to be here, and how, so far as I may judge, he came to be affected as you now see.

"I was out in my yacht, the *Owhyhee*, cruising, as is my favourite custom at certain seasons of the year. My wife and sister were with me, and my son, who is now pursuing his studies in the Cambridge University. Walter, as he is called, was amusing himself with a new telescope that I had given him as a birthday gift. He was trying to count the number of ships that could be seen at once on our horizon. Suddenly he called out—

"'Papa, come and look at this ship; it must be on fire.'

"I took the glass, and saw a large vessel to leeward with all its masts and rigging in a sheet of flame. The skipper of my yacht instantly bore down in that direction. We were a great distance from the doomed vessel, and as the wind changed and the sea roughened a good deal, we had to tack about in order to approach her. At last we saw one sudden burst of flame, an awful sound came booming across the waves, and then the hull of the vessel, with a great gap in its side, sank down into the water. In another moment she was lost to sight. We cruised over the spot and round about it, but with the exception of a few shattered timbers and broken spars, there was nothing left to tell the awful tale.

"The wind was blowing hard from the west, the sea was very rough, and a gale was coming on, so I gave orders to the skipper to make all sail for port. By and by one of the crew called my attention to something

that looked like the head and shoulders of a man just above the water. Walter's glass proved the suspicion to be true.

"A boat was hastily lowered, and in a short time John was reached. He was clinging instinctively to a hen-coop, and was all but exhausted. When he was brought on board we found that his clothing hung on him in tatters, his face and hands were blistered and black as with exploded gunpowder, his hair was nearly all burnt off his head, and on the scalp there was a tremendous wound which extended from the crown to the left ear, and which must all but have beaten the life out of him.

"We did our best for the poor fellow with such appliances as we had at hand. My sister Bella gave up her berth to him, and constituted herself his nurse, and I do not hesitate to say, that it was her thoughtful skill and tender, unremitting care, that brought him back to life again. When he was fully restored to consciousness, he fixed his fine grey eyes on her, and said with infinite tenderness—

"'My darling Maggie! God bless you.'

"Soon after he became again insensible, and from that day to this he has never uttered that name again, though he has a touching regard for Bella, whose slightest word is law to him, and whom he will follow anywhere like a faithful dog.

"When we reached home I sent to Honolulu for Dr. Ramsay, and our effort and care were finally rewarded by his restoration to reason and to life. But from the day to which I have referred it has seemed as though the memory of his past life has all but left him.

As I have said, when we asked his name, he said 'John;' when we asked what his second name was, he shook his head and answered, 'I don't know.'

"When we asked him about the ship, where it came from, what its name was, and what was the cause of the explosion, he could only answer in a dazed way, 'What ship? I'm sure I don't know.' In short, the shock, the stun, the awful blow on his head, which may have been done by a falling beam, or by his falling after being shot up into the air on some hard substance, had all but obliterated memory, and to his poor shaken brain the past was a nearly perfect blank.

"When he began to be able to stroll about the grounds, I had my suspicion that he had been the captain of the ill-fated bark, for one day I called my retriever to me which answers to that name.

"'Come here, Captain! Captain! Captain!' I called, and John came across the grass directly and asked if I wanted him. He could, however, explain nothing, but retired in a sort of dazed wonder, as if he was struggling on the border land of some great mystery.

"Dr. Ramsay has taken immense pains with him. He is now, however, in England, and to me it has been a labour of love to do for him all I can. He is eminently loveable and obliging. Bella is his first favourite always. He seems to regard her as a sister, and when, as at times it will, his head distresses him, he will come and sit by her, place her hand on his poor throbbing brow, and lift such an appealing and trustful look to her that she cannot restrain her tears. These attacks, however, are far less frequent, and that which he complained of this evening is the first he has had for

months; and that may well be accounted for by the events of the day.

"Dr. Ramsay thinks that if he could be placed among former friends and among familiar scenes, his memory will soon come back again. He thinks, too, that if some shock should come to him, some sudden and overpowering surprise, it would bring back the balance lost in that fearful catastrophe at sea.

"To tell you the honest truth, we shall feel sad to part with him. But I am quite of opinion that if you can induce him to go back with you, though that may be difficult, it will end, as I hope and pray, in the recovery of his memory, and his full restoration to the pleasures and the joys of life.

"If you will take my advice, and not attribute it to selfish motives, I should advise you to stay here a while longer. It is evident that both Mr. M'Leod and Sandy Muir, the latter especially, will be able to influence him. Your constant reference to past times and facts will help us in the task of lifting up and lifting off the veil which lies behind him so thick and dark. There, gentlemen. That's the story. Now let us join the ladies, and probably John will be in a condition, in Sandy's company, to join us too."

Ronald would fain have expressed his gratitude to his host for his affectionate interest in his unfortunate brother, but he was cut short by the emphatic response—

"Not one word, Mr. M'Leod. My reward will be perfect when John, as I am certain he will be, is himself again."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RONALD M'LEOD OBTAINS A VALUABLE AUTOGRAPH. THE PRISONER DESIRES TO GO HOME.

In the course of the evening Lord Weyburn set himself to have his revenge for the compulsory suspension of his usual loquacity. He had a special purpose in view, however, and with all his impulsiveness he rarely acted without a purpose. John Stallibrass, quite relieved from his headache, gladly made one of the little party in the drawing-room, and was quite delighted when Sandy Muir was invited to accompany him. Sandy was certainly not much acquainted with drawing-rooms, or with the manners and usages of their ordinary occupants, nor, as may be well imagined, was he in drawing-room trim. In the usual and normal course of things, that honest sailor would have found far more comfort and would have been much more at home in the kitchen.

But he was told, and it was a joy to him to believe it, that Captain Stallibrass needed him, was better and happier for being with him, and that on him they relied for helping to bring back the lagging and all but lacking memory of his captain to its olden power and place. I am perfectly certain that under those circumstances, and influenced by those considerations, if it had been a queen's drawing-room on a levee day,

Sandy would have run the gauntlet of rank, fashion, and ceremonial in cool and self-contained content.

Lord Weyburn's private design, and one which he did not impart to his companions, was to draw out John Stallibrass, with a view to satisfy himself that he was actually *compos mentis*, apart from the matter of memory, and as far as might be to further an improvement of his powers in that direction. He related incidents of personal travel, harped a good deal on maritime matters, using language only familiar to mariners, and often, it must be confessed, drawing the "long-bow" to extract from him either question or retort. He spoke of all sorts of places, lands, and people, and kept appealing to John to gain his assent or elicit his opinion.

He was a little non-plussed occasionally by Sandy Muir. That candid and plain-spoken son of the sea had had a considerable experience of his own; and when his lordship ventured on a Gulliver-like exaggeration, Sandy would resent it in the interests of "my captain," as though he thought it was a joke cut at John's expense, and he was not going to submit to his being made game of.

On the whole, however, John Stallibrass was quite able to take care of himself, and at times Lord Weyburn's highly-coloured statements were met by a clever repartee, that elicited the laughter of the company, and gave the watchful and anxious Ronald great delight.

"Talking about winters," said his lordship, following up the subject which had been previously broached, "do you remember the winter of 18—? That *was* a

winter, if you like; why, the Arctic regions appeared suddenly to be extended all through the temperate zone; icebergs reared their frigid peaks, and carried their polar atmosphere into St. George's Channel and the German Ocean. I had been cruising in the Baltic, had visited St. Petersburg, and "—here he looked at John Stallibrass,—"would you believe it? I could not get my yacht into Leith Harbour for the solid ice that barred its passage!"

"Dear me!" said John, coolly enough, and with the old humorous twinkle in his eye, "I suppose that was because you couldn't get it out of the Baltic Sea."

There was a general laugh at this sally, in which John did not join, and his lordship had warning that he had played on that string quite long enough. Then Lord Weyburn asked him if he had ever seen Leith Harbour. John's countenance fell at once. He paused for a moment, and then came the old, sad, sad answer, slowly uttered, "I don't know."

It was evident that nothing was to be gained by direct questioning; then a bright thought struck Ronald. While the conversation was proceeding he sketched the once bluff and burly captain of the *Deucalion*, dressed in the full uniform he had long worn with honour and honest pride. It was a striking likeness. There stood Honest John in very person, jolly, hearty, strong. He hid it quietly away. By and by he jokingly proposed that he should sketch all the members of the party. Miss Strachan's likeness was drawn first, and was then passed round and much admired.

"Sign your name to it," said Ronald, "and let me show it to my wife."

So the work proceeded. At last came John's turn, Ronald quietly seemed to sketch him. Then placing the portrait he had already drawn under his brother's eye, he slapped him on the shoulder, and said in a careless and familiar voice—

"There, Captain! write your autograph under that, old fellow, and I'll give it to Agnes."

Without an instant's hesitation—had he hesitated he would probably have failed—he took the pen and wrote in his usual firm, large hand—

JOHN STALLIBRASS.

Concluding it with a flourish of large dimensions as in former and happier days.

"That's it! that's it, Mr. Fletcher!" he said, rising to his feet. "You asked me what my name was,—John Stallibrass. What an odd thing!"

A great silence fell on the little group, and every eye was fixed on him. He stood in amaze, drew his hand across his forehead as if to draw some veil away, turned dazed eyes on his own sign manual, sighed heavily, and resumed his seat, saying again—

"What an odd thing!"

And that was all! The gate had swung open suddenly to let that word through, and then had as suddenly closed again, snapped and latched and locked, and, alas, without a key!

Full of hope, however, Ronald now proceeded to sketch Maggie—Maggie as she was before her great sorrow had paled her winsome face or dimmed her

mirthful eye—Maggie as she was before those doleful widow's weeds were donned—Maggie dressed in the tasteful and piquant fashion of the old days when she met the captain returning from his voyage, and received his loving kiss; and by her side stood Georgie, the youthful image of his father, and Trixie, sweet and fairy-like, with her mother's liquid eyes.

Ronald never put so much nature into a picture in his life. Oh that he had colours, he thought, to make both eyes and lips have language! When it was completed, he placed it in his brother's hands, and watched him with a beating heart.

John Stallibrass fixed his eyes upon it. His hands, his whole frame, trembled as he held it. His face became purple, and the lookers-on became alarmed.

"The faces, sweet, sweet faces of my dreams," he said. Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up. He kissed the picture passionately, and then flinging his arms upon the table, he buried his bearded face between them and sobbed and wept as though he would weep his life away.

Then came Bella, always his refuge and his comfort and his trust. She laid her hand upon his brow, she drew his head to lean upon her breast, and said—

"John, dear John, all's well, dear friend; you know them who they are?"

"I wish to God I did, sweet sister. But I know I love them with all the passion of my soul! Do, do, do lift this cap, this iron band from off me!" Again he took up the picture, "You darlings!" he said, and folding up the paper, put it near his heart.

"Brother," said Ronald, "they are waiting for you; will you go with me and find them?"

He seemed to be like the blind man in the gospel story after the Healer's first touch. He saw men as trees walking. He stood on some mysterious borderland, stood in the dark, and could not cross the line; yet sights and sounds came to him across the border, to him in the land of mist and dreams and veiled vision, from the land of reality and fact. He smiled on Ronald an answer to his question. Then, strange to say, he turned to Bella, and said—

"Sister, I want to go home!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

ZIAH QUAYLE RECEIVES A LETTER. TIMBER-TOE IS SUBJECTED TO UNUSUAL TREATMENT.

We must now return to Craigmuir, a journey which, I flatter myself, the reader will be glad to make for the sake of resuming his acquaintance with that honest old sailor, Ziah Quayle.

One morning Ziah was seated at his breakfast, discussing with amazing relish a broiled mackerel of quite remarkable dimensions. It had been set apart specially for him by one of the fisher folk out of a good catch, as a token of regard. He was suddenly startled by a rat-tat at the door.

"Hallo!" quoth Ziah to himself, "this here ain't pay day. It can't be the postman Jim."

"It can, though, an what's more, it are," said her Majesty's servant, who had already opened the door, and who now handed to Ziah a pre-paid letter, with the remark—

"Here's a letter for you, Ziah. It's a *billy doo*, I think; an' it's a foreigner into the bargain. Take care what you're about, old friend, take care what you are about; and don't you go a marryin' a nigger body or a yallow woman, 'cause they're hot-tempered through livin' in a warm climate an eatin' pepperpods; an'

they can't mend your stockin's nor sew your buttons on for you."

Then straightway the humorous Mercury went away with a chuckle, to deal his jokes and his letters other where. Ziah stood for some moments, keeping the door open by propping his wooden leg against it, and looking at the letter in his hand. He was not quite certain in his own mind, you see, that Jim the post-man had not made some mistake. As he had said, it was not pay day. That came once a month, and any other time letters came to his cabin about as often as they came to Craigmuir Neb.

Now Ziah was not a scholar by any means. His schooling had not carried him quite through the spelling-book, and he had to employ the spelling process yet, especially where writing was concerned. Plain print was a much easier business to manage. He could read the Bible without that help, except in special cases, and these he tackled manfully and spelt them through, or if it was a name of ominous length, he quietly said, "hard word," and passed on.

He saw, however, that on the letter he held in his hand, the words "Ziah Quayle" were written, or rather inscribed in printed characters, so that there could be no mistake.

"It *is* for me," said he, withdrawing timber-toe from its post of duty by the door, "but the why and the wherefore, and the what's in it, is a riddle as ain't to be rightly guessed, leastwise not without lookin' at the inside."

The latter process certainly was very likely to make guessing easy. So Ziah closed the door; then he

repaired to a little drawer in the old-fashioned oak "dresser," in which he kept a few articles that needed special care. From thence he took out a pair of large brass-framed spectacles, put them on his nose with a slow precision that denoted the importance of the act in which he was about to be engaged; then resuming his seat at the table, he set himself carefully and deliberately to break the seal.

Just at this moment his nose caught a reminding sniff of the broiled mackerel, and Ziah remembered not only that his breakfast was unfinished, but that the mackerel would spoil. Being eminently a man of practical common sense, he laid his letter on the chest, took off his spectacles and placed them by its side, and turned to breakfast with hearty good will, saying to himself—

"That won't spoil; fish will. If there's good news in it, why, it'll be another breakfast, an' if it's bad news, why, it'll come soon enough at any time, an' a good breakfast 'll act as a sort o' breakwater."

When he had fairly settled down to business, and the whole anatomy of the mackerel was exposed, a light seemed to break suddenly in upon him as to whom the letter *might* be from. Down went his fork, his plate was thrust from him.

"What a dodderin' old idiot I must be," said he, seizing the letter, and donning his "specs." "I'll lay a groat to a grunstone, it's from Sandy Muir. Oh dear, oh dear! I'm fairly frightened to see what's inside!"

Then, like many who are more familiar with the postal service than he, he looked at the address again, as if that would throw some light on its contents. At last, off went the wrapper: the writing, he was sure,

was far beyond anything that Sandy Muir could do, so he made a dash for the signature, and read—

"With the sincere regards of your old ship-mate,
"WEYBURN."

"God bless him!" quoth Ziah. "Noble by name an' noble by natur', that's what he is, an' he acts as such. Who would ha' thought it?" With which questionable and back-handed compliment he proceeded to spell out the contents of the letter. His lordship had wisely made his communication simple, brief, concise.

"MY OLD AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,—You will be glad to know that Sandy Muir has found Captain Stallibrass! He has been kept here by a wound in the head, which has injured his memory. He is getting better, and will come home with us at once. Keep the good news to yourself just yet. I will let you know of our arrival at Leith.

"With the sincere regards of your old ship-mate,
"WEYBURN."

Ziah read the letter through three times over to be sure that he had not made any mistake. Then he laid down the letter, took off his spectacles, folded them and tried to put them in their wooden case. But in this he failed. His hands shook so that he could not hit the opening for the life of him, so he laid the two side by side upon the table. Then he went to the door and locked it, and shot the bolt to make assurance doubly sure. He proceeded to take a few turns around the floor, and then, despite the obstinate stiffness of timber-toe, which placed him at a considerable disadvantage, he danced a sailor's hornpipe,

making such prods and lunges on the boards, that they might well have been mistaken for the thud of a pavior's hammer.

Out of breath with this peculiar exercise, but still unrelieved of the pent-up commotion in his soul, he took his glazed hat from its customary nail in the white-washed wall and carefully placed it on his head. Then holding it by the brim, he waited for an imaginary signal. Then he quickly took it off, waved it round his head as high as his arm would reach, and shouted, or seemed to shout, in a hoarse whisper, and with as much motion of his lips as if he was bellowing to somebody on the top of Craigmuir Neb, "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" and finally hung up his hat again, returned to his chair, put his arms upon the well-secured deal table, laid his grey head upon them, and said—

"Thank God! Thank God! O Georgie, O sweet, darling Trixie! There *is* more to follow, by and by!"

I have said that Ziah Quayle was truly religious. There was nothing effusive about his piety. None of the glib-tongued formulas that too often stand for and parody religion ever left his lips; but the root of the matter was in him, and it is only the simple truth to say that now his heartfelt praises went up to God as sincerely as did the prayers of a former day.

Ziah felt that he must visit The Cottage; must go and look at the widow, for whom such a gift and boon was on its way; must go and have an hour with Trixie and her brother George. It was a perilous undertaking, having regard to the extent of his knowledge, the

secrecy which sealed his lips, and the warm sympathy of his heart. But necessity knows no law, and Ziah's loving soul was drawn to The Cottage and its inmates as steadily, truly, and resistlessly as the needle to the pole.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ZIAH QUAYLE IS UNDER EXAMINATION, AND HAS "A BIT O' BUSINESS, SPECIAL LIKE."

ZIAH QUAYLE'S timber-toe mounted the hillside so briskly and at such a pace that it might have been the veritable wooden leg immortalised by the old song, which fairly ran away with its proprietor. It was a clear, fine frosty day, and though the air was winterly, the sun shone brightly and with warmth. Mrs. Stallibrass had been tempted forth to take "a winter's walk at noon." Ziah found her and the children seated on a rude bench, a sort of "traveller's seat" near the house. Here, screened from the chill though gentle breeze, they were yet in possession of the sunny side of the way.

Trixie, well wrapped and with a healthy rosebud glowing on either cheek, was seated by her mother's side, nursing her big blue-eyed doll, and holding converse with it by the aid of the secret arrangement before mentioned. Georgie was busy with the hummlin' top, as Trixie called it, which had a fair and favourable field for its peculiar powers on the smooth and frost-bound path.

"Good morning, Ziah," said Mrs. Stallibrass when she observed the old sailor watching Georgie, who engineered his top with surprising skill. "You see the

children still enjoy your 'fairin's.' I think *I* shall have to ask for a 'fairin'' myself, you choose them with such taste and judgment."

Ziah's eyes twinkled with delight, for words of praise from the gentle widow were always grateful to his ears.

"All right, ma'am," said he, thinking of his secret. "It'll be comin', I dare say, on some of these fine days. You may live in hope."

"And will it be able to talk, dear Ziah?" inquired little Trixie, who had the profoundest faith in his word and in the extent of his resources.

"Talk!" said Ziah impulsively. "Ay, ay, that it will. I tell you, Trixie, it'll talk like, like a Jack Tar with a double allowance o' grog."

"And will it open and shut its eyes, like dolly does?" continued the young persistent inquirer after knowledge.

"It'll *open* its eyes, I'll warrant me," said Ziah stoutly. "But as for shuttin' 'em again, why, you see that is quite another thing."

"And can mamma carry it in her arms," quoth the simple maiden, "like I carry dolly?"

"Why, you see, Trixie, darlin', that's more than I can rightly say," said Ziah, feeling his chin, and speaking somewhat dubiously, "but, 'pon my word, I shouldn't be surprised to see it try!"

Mrs. Stallibrass listened with wonder at the way in which honest Ziah was drawing on his imagination: and thinking that the maiden had pursued her inquiries far enough, she said—

"Never mind, Trixie, dear. We must wait until

it comes; and when it *does* come, we shall soon find out what it can do. Shan't we, Ziah?"

"That you will, ma'am, that you will," said Ziah with an emphatic and meaning nod that would have done credit to Lord Eldon. "That's as sartin as a muster on board ship when all hands are piped for grog."

For the life of him, Ziah could not refrain from taking a turn or two on timber-toe, walking in a circle, as though he was making a preliminary flourish to indulging in a hornpipe then and there. He thought better of it, however, remembering his orders of secrecy, and sheered off to Georgie, who attacked his weak spot on another quarter. That young gentleman was watching his top which was beginning to "wobble," sure symptom of the "sleepy" stage that ends in its temporary decease. Georgie's mind was still running on the subject of his mamma's fairin'.

"I'll tell you what, Ziah," said he, in a confidential half-whisper, "you bring mamma something that will make her laugh right out, you know. She does laugh now, sometimes. Trixie an' me, we make her laugh, and she *is* so nice then. Will what you bring her make her laugh?"

"Laugh!" said Ziah, with a lofty smile, "I should just think so. She'll laugh like a hungry middy when there's fresh beef an' plum-duff for dinner; an' she'll sing, *and* dance, *and*"—

Ziah was going to add, "cry," but he suddenly bethought him that that was a feat, a retrograde action that Georgie was little likely to appreciate, so he added, being in a fog for a suitable verb—

"An', an' be kind of a sort o' univarsal golumptiousness, as the sayin' is."

Whereupon Georgie, as if he understood that frame of body and mind perfectly, replied—

"O Ziah, that will be nice!"

Ziah felt that if he did not mind, his secret would leap out in spite of himself, so he sought to regain his balance by humming,

"Oh dear, what can the matter be,
Johnnie stops long at"—

"O Ziah Quayle, you old idiot!" said Ziah, breaking suddenly off and speaking to himself, *sotto voce*, "you desarve a whack on the head wi' your own timber-toe!"

By way of effecting a diversion, he posted up to Trixie, lifted her shoulder height, and headed the procession to the garden gate. As he put the little maiden safely down on *terra firma*, he whispered in her ear—

"Don't forget, Trixie, darlin'. Every night, you know, an' every mornin'."

Trixie gave a wise little nod, as she whispered in return—

"I know, dear Ziah, I know; and mamma's fairin' 'll be coming by and by."

Ziah Quayle required his handkerchief just then, and dismissed alike the tear in his eye and the lump in his throat, by a loud trumpeting through the nose that might well have started all the echoes around Craigmuir Neb.

"Won't you come in a bit?" said Mrs. Stallibrass; "come in, and stop for a cup of tea."

"No, thank you, ma'am," said Ziah, who felt that he was a very powder magazine of secrets, and that a spark would precipitate an explosion. "Scuse me, ma'am, I've a little bit o' business, special like, down i' the village. Good day, Mrs. Stallibrass, an', an' God bless you."

So saying, Ziah made off with all speed, thoroughly convinced that safety lay only in retreat.

Mrs. Stallibrass hardly knew what to make of him. He was queer somehow, decidedly queer. Like the whimsical suitor of Molly Brierley in the Irish song, he was not himself at all! She followed him with her eye as he stumped away at a rapid rate, and thought that the bit o' business, special like, must be of a very urgent character indeed. Had her eye followed him into his cabin, the widow would have been considerably more astonished.

Arrived safely within his own dominions, Ziah shut the door and bolted it.

"Now then!" said he, "I'll have it out, I must have it out, or I shall bust up like a steam boiler, I know I shall!"

He stood upright on the floor, drew in his breath for a strong expulsion, put his hands, one on each side of his mouth, to make a speaking trumpet, and then *shouted* in the lowest and most muffled of whispers—

"John Stallibrass is alive! *alive!!* ALIVE!!! John Stallibrass is comin' home! *comin' home!!* COMIN' HOME!!!"

Off went his hat, and waving it round his head, he pretended to shout, making his face as red as the comb of a turkey cock with the effort, "Hurrah! Hurrah!

Hurrah!" Thrice did he repeat the jubilant cheer, then he betook himself to his pipe, and under its soothing influence lapsed into quiet. The bit o' business, special like, was transacted; and Ziah Quayle felt proportionately relieved.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH BELLA AND LORD WEYBURN ARE MUCH INTERESTED.

As may be expected, a keen watch was kept on John Stallibrass by anxious and loving eyes, to note whether memory did make any successful effort to *reassert* its power. But the recovery of its lost treasures, if it was a recovery at all, was very, very slow, shreds and patches out of dreamland, resulting in a confusion and perplexity whose tokens on his face were pitiful to see. His knowledge of matters which he had read, heard, or learnt, did certainly become fuller and clearer; but so far as the facts of his own life-history were concerned up to the time of that awful blow, nothing was real; a little was kept as a sort of dream-world, but most was lost, lost. Would it ever, ever come back again?

He attached himself more than ever to Bella. He seemed to feel in her some link, some reflex, some representative of the form he had seen in his dreams, his darling Maggie. He never mistook her for Maggie, and indeed they were very much unlike; yet he seemed to blend the two together, and to imagine that re-union and home was somehow dependent on keeping Bella perpetually in view. This was in part explained to her, at least, when, on the morning after his expres-

sion of desire to go home, he met Bella in the garden. In the course of conversation she said—

"You will soon be going to leave us now, John; we shall be very sorry to lose you."

There was a gleam in John's eye which would have delighted Ronald, could he have seen it, it was so thoroughly characteristic of the John Stallibrass of old.

"Bella," said he, "there is no need for me to leave you, dear. *You* can go with me, if you like."

Bella stood still, and looked at him in a sort of shocked surprise. Surely he hadn't so far lost memory and mind as to think himself free to marry her! Yet it sounded like, and he looked like, something equally serious.

"What *do* you mean, John?"

"Only that Lord Weyburn will be glad to give you free passage in the *Highland Lassie*, if you are agreeable, Bella! My sweet, true friend, I wish you were."

So saying, he departed, and left the maiden to her meditations.

Bella knew now what he meant, and was glad he went, so that she might blush unseen, though she was never likely to waste her sweetness on the desert air. She was very seriously inclined to think that what John had said was very true. And when she put the question fairly to her own heart, she was candid enough to own that she should not dislike the voyage.

Sauntering along a palm-embowered path that fringed the ornamental grounds, she was met by the nobleman himself, who *looked* as though he was surprised to see her there. Looks are not always satisfactory indications of the looker's mind, and Bella had

a sort of intuition that he would have been more surprised not to find her there. That remarkably apt and forcible quotation from Robert Burns, and that most ingenuous confusion of face that followed it, taken in connection with sundry subsequent items of observation, could scarcely fail to reveal the fact that his lordship had, or thought he had, found his fate.

His lordship expressed his pleasure at finding her thus at liberty, and straightway opened up a conversation.

"I judge from your name, Miss Strachan," said he, "though I find you so far away from the home nest, that you hail from bonnie Scotland:

> 'Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood.'

Am I right in my conjecture?"

"Your lordship guesses rightly," she replied. "I was born not exactly 'within a mile o' Edinboro' toon,' but within a short distance of it, and at a dear old spot from whence at times, and in clear weather, we could get a view of 'Edina, Scotia's darling seat!' or at any rate of Arthur's Seat, which comes to much the same thing."

"Indeed!" said his lordship. "Why, that is true of my own place, and if, as I judge, you are speaking of a point to the northward of it, you must at one time have been not a distant neighbour."

"Oh yes," said Bella, "I know Weyburn very well. I have often gone with my uncle to enjoy a ramble through its romantic scenery, and to follow my own

bent among the woods and slopes, and by the borders of the burn while he was fishing for trout."

"Why, you don't mean to say that you are the niece of my dear father's old friend and companion-in-arms, Sir John Strachan, the Laird of Dunwraith?" inquired Lord Weyburn in surprise.

"I am glad to say that I have that honour," said Bella, with a smile; "and dearly did I love the kind old man, who was even more than a father to me when I lost both my parents by death. I am happy to think the love was mutual. He used jestingly to say that he must get an Act of Parliament to override the marriage laws, or turn Roman Catholic, and get a dispensation, so as to marry me outright, for he could not live without me."

"As to that last point," said his lordship emphatically, "I can quite understand him, and coincide; but as to the former, I thank God that he could do neither the one nor the other.

"I am not so clear about that," said Bella, seeking to hide her blushes by smelling at a growing rose. "Sir John was so very good and true and kind that, that"—

Bella felt that she was involving herself a little awkwardly, and made a diversion by calling his attention to a gloriously magnificent magnolia which had trellised itself around a low clump of trees, and which was just then ablaze with a wealth of gorgeous blooms.

"I understood before I sailed for Honolulu that Dunwraith was not unlikely to go into the market," resumed his lordship after he had paid his due tribute of admiration to the magnolia. "And to tell the truth, I have given my steward orders to keep his eye on it with

a view to purchase. But it seems a pity that so fine a property should go out of the family which has held it and its proud traditions for so many generations."

"Well, to tell the truth," said Bella, "I do not part with it very willingly; but as I have left Scotland so long, and there is so little probability of my going back again, my brother-in-law advises me to dispose of it, especially as there are such grand opportunities of making investments in this glorious island, in which he already holds so great a share of influence and so large a stake."

"And why, may I ask, is there so little prospect of your seeing Scotland again?" inquired Lord Weyburn in a somewhat sympathetic tone.

Before Bella could proceed to answer the question, the conversation was interrupted by John Stallibrass, who suddenly appeared before them, accompanied by his faithful man Friday, Sandy Muir.

Lord Weyburn was strongly inclined, in spite of his hearty liking for both of them, to wish them just then at Hanover, Jericho, Coventry, Bath, or any other of the places to which those who get into the wrong place at the wrong time are often mentally dismissed.

"I want to go home, Bella," said the persistent John, who evidently had a certain method in his madness, "and you must take me."

The poor fellow lifted such pleading eyes, and spoke in such a plaintive tone, that the young lady could not find it in her heart just then to dash his hopes to the ground by affirming their impossibility. She paused a few moments, not being prepared with an apt reply.

John's face clouded over, and Lord Weyburn kindly

came to the rescue. He laid his hand on the captain's shoulder, and said—

"I'll take you home, John Stallibrass. The yacht is waiting in the bay yonder; and you and Sandy may get ready to go on board."

The same gleam as before lighted up John's grey eye as he replied—

"Thank you. But Bella must go too. Promise me that you will ask her to go with me. Promise!" And he seized his lordship's hand and waited for an answer.

"Indeed I will," said his lordship, "and what is more, I'll do my best to win her consent. You leave her to me a little while. If I succeed, I'll come and tell you."

John led his comrade away, saying softly, as though it was only meant for Sandy's private ear—

"Come on, Sandy. Bella ought to say 'Yes' to him. And she always does what is good and right."

And with this piece of advice, administered aside, and duly noted by the party concerned, he left them once more alone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LORD WEYBURN AND BELLA STRACHAN "WILL BOTH TAKE JOHN STALLIBRASS HOME."

"What an unusually sensible fellow John is!" said Lord Weyburn to his fair companion, when John had taken his departure; "he always hits upon the right thing to say, and at the right time. I am much obliged to the dear fellow, Miss Strachan, for giving me so apt and timely a commission. I'm afraid I'm rather talkative under ordinary circumstances, but I am the other thing decidedly when the deep feelings of my heart are concerned. Forgive me if I take too great a liberty, but the one supreme desire of my soul is to take you back to Scotland as my wife. I love you dearly, and as I have never loved woman since the day I followed my sweet mother to the grave. Can you give me your heart? That I must know before I ask your hand. I have been an unsettled wanderer almost from the commencement of my manhood. In you I trust and hope I have found an anchor. If you will but return with me, to be the queen of my heart, bonnie Scotland will be dearer than ever, and Weyburn Castle the happiest spot on earth. I could say more, but I need not. In this matter I wear my heart upon my sleeve. I love you. Can you give me your heart in return?"

I imagine that for him this was a shorter declaration of love than might have been expected, though I have known those who have managed to say as much in far fewer words, and indeed of cases where the whole business has been begun and settled with fewer words on both sides. Only you see his lordship was naturally a loquacious man.

Bella could not possibly make any mistake as to the strength of his sentiments; there was no room to doubt the reality of his love. As he stood there, a truly noble man apart from his title, possessed of graces both of mind and body, and having given full evidence of the presence in him of the nobler qualities of manhood, she felt that there was but one answer possible. His eyes told so true a story, and her own heart gave fit reply. Bella felt that her fate had come. She laid her hand in his and said frankly—

"Yes," and then added with a smile, for she was a sensible woman, and could make up in brevity for her future lord's ability in the other direction, "We will both take John Stallibrass home!"

"And I," said he, "who loved John Stallibrass even before I saw him, will hold him dearer for the aid he rendered me to-day." Then followed what I need not more particularly relate. Let the married reader supply the addenda out of his own experiences on a like occasion. Let the unmarried readers do the same from their intuitions as to what will be the case when their time comes.

In course of time Bella made her escape from the thraldom in which her lover seemed resolved to keep her, to inform her sister of her precious secret, and to



"We will both take John Stallibrass home."—*Page* 224.

hear from her brother-in-law that she had soon recovered from her "severe disappointment about the artist."

Both of them agreed that it was well and wisely done, and both united with her in the wish and prayer that God's blessing might seal the new relationship, the only benediction that secures abiding strength and happiness with the marriage tie.

Lord Weyburn was in a state of complete satisfaction and content with himself and everybody else. He proceeded at once to fulfil his promise to John Stallibrass, and tell him that Bella was going home with them. John had already informed Ronald that such was going to be the case. He had read the lovers through and through, and did not prophesy before he knew. Ronald was making sceptical remarks on the information when his lordship appeared.

"John Stallibrass, you will be happy to hear that Bella's going home with us? I managed to persuade her, you see."

"Yes, my lord," said John, with a smile of meaning and an expression on his face of real satisfaction, "and you are happy to tell the news. I knew she was."

"You knew, John? How could you know?" quoth his lordship.

"Because you carried 'Will you' in your face, and she carried 'Yes' in hers. It was just like a pair of signal flags run up at sea, and I knew the code."

This was the first reference that John Stallibrass had made to his previous knowledge of maritime matters, and was regarded both by Ronald and Lord Weyburn as of good omen. "Rejoice with me, my

friend," said his lordship, turning to Ronald. "I am going to transfer the fairest flower in the island to bonnie Scotland."

"And to plant it in the grounds of Weyburn Castle, I suspect," said Ronald. "With all my heart, I congratulate you on your prize. She is worth winning."

"Now," said John, "that it is all settled, let us go to-day."

That was hardly practicable. Things do come to maturity with wondrous rapidity in the tropics, but even there Bella could scarcely be "wooed and won and married an' a'" in the short space of an afternoon. However, no time was lost. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, though sorry in one sense at the prospect of Bella's early departure, could not but rejoice that she had linked her fortunes with those of such a worthy and in every way desirable mate, and had placed herself and the Dunwraith estate under such capable guardianship. Preparations were at once made for the wedding.

It is not in my province to deal with matters of that kind. My poor pen refuses the perplexing task of dealing with wedding robes and orange blossoms and all the paraphernalia and peculiar processes connected with the marriage day. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the Very Reverend the Bishop of Honolulu welded the bonds in due and fitting fashion, and amid surroundings which were in keeping with tropical colour and luxuriance.

This important and highly interesting business despatched, there was nothing now to prevent the immediate departure of the happy couple and their companions. The *Highland Lassie* received an abundant

victualling and a sufficient supply of stores at Honolulu, and then bidding an affectionate farewell to the excellent and kindly couple at Fletcher's Farm, the yacht weighed anchor and stood out to sea. Then, hey for Bonnie Scotland! and for the village of Craigmuir, where Maggie Stallibrass dwelt, all unconscious of the coming "fairin'," and Ziah Quayle was wrestling with a secret which was proving altogether too slippery and lively for him to keep.

Under the tender and all potent influence of Bella,—I cannot suddenly and without due training call her Lady Weyburn,—John Stallibrass was quiet and, as far as might be, content. He seemed to regard himself as one who was about to visit a land that he had already seen and known in his dreams, or rather in some pre-existent state in which he was something else and somewhere other than what and where he was.

It was noted by his watchful friends, that his surroundings on board ship became more and more familiar to him; that nautical names and things were speedily understood by him, and on more than one occasion he even went so far as to offer some suggestion to Captain Allan as to the handling of the ship.

In spite of the sad deprivation which still hid the bulk of his past life from all possibility of review, and which gave to his tone and face and manner a mournful cast, it was amusing to see how heartily and readily he attached himself to Lord Weyburn now that he and Bella were man and wife. His lordship's cheerful ways, his hearty fashion of speech, and his constant pains to train John's groping mind back again into the light of facts, were attended with much

success, and Sandy Muir was informed in confidence that Lord Weyburn was as good a fellow as ever loved the sea.

"Ay, ay, captain," Sandy would reply, "the two's well matched. Thanks to you, says I, for bringing 'em together."

"Nay, Sandy," John would answer, "they brought themselves together, or rather God's providence did. All that I had to do was to give them a bit of a push."

Then John would begin again to fight the constant battle with his palsied memory.

"Tell me, Sandy, tell me again where and when did I meet you before?"

For the fiftieth time the patient and faithful tar would tell the story of his own salvation from the swirling waves, and for the fiftieth time Honest John and he would weep in company at the tender story; and for the fiftieth time John Stallibrass would draw his hand nervously and impatiently across his brow and say, as if speaking to himself, "Can it be? Strange! strange! strange!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ZIAH QUAYLE EXPRESSES A STRONG OPINION ON THE SUBJECT NEAREST TO HIS HEART.

WHILE matters were thus progressing on the high seas, and the *Highland Lassie* was pursuing her homeward voyage, life at Craigmuir was flowing along with much smoothness. The widow's faith in God, the memory of her strange interview with her dead husband, the increasing comfort she obtained from her winsome bairns, and the kind and unremitting attention of Ziah Quayle, had all a growing influence for good. Latterly she had found precious help and consolation in the presence of her sister Agnes, who seemed almost to have taken up her abode at The Cottage.

Ronald's wife had a difficult part to play, for she had a woman's intuitive conviction that John Stallibrass would be found, and it was very, very hard to be tongue-tied on the subject. If Ziah Quayle was so hard put to it to hold his secret during his occasional visits to the widow's house, she must have felt the task even harder still, who was with her bereaved and stricken sister all the time.

She did often, in a delicate and cautious way, lead the conversation as near it as she durst. On one occasion she had been reading the story of a long-lost son

returning to his rejoicing parents who had long given him up for dead.

"What strange surprises God's providence often sends," said Agnes; "surprises that suddenly change the dull tenor of some lives; and it seems as though their life-course begins anew; or instead of flowing on slowly and sadly, like a stream through low marshland, it is suddenly diverted, and begins to leap and fall and flow, lively and fresh, among chafing boulders, through meadows and under overhanging woods. How doubly precious such a change must be."

"Yes," replied Maggie, "but there are equally strange surprises of the other kind. The bright and lively mountain stream goes laughing and leaping on its way a while, and then, after one final rush of joy, falls to a dead level and filters, slow and turgid, dark and lonesome, through the swamp without beauty and almost without life. That has been my course, dear Agnes; the swamp has been a very bog through which my later life has run. Let me be thankful that *that* is past, at any rate. I shall never know light and laughing sparkle any more; but I thank God that though mine are still waters and flow softly and mournfully, they flow clear, and the sky is reflected in it as it goes. And goes whither? Towards the great sea, whither my love has gone before."

All such conversation invariably ended in a minor key, and Agnes feared to pursue it, lest she should do more harm than good. She was a great comfort to her sister, however, and being merry, lively, light of heart, the children found in her companionship a great delight.

Whenever opportunity offered, she would pay a half-secret visit to the Cabin, and compare notes with Ziah Quayle.

"Well, Ziah," said she, on one such occasion, "how do you feel about it now? Don't you think it is about time that we were having some news about the *Highland Lassie?*"

"Oh, bless you, ma'am," said Ziah, whose own anxieties on that head were growing almost unbearable, "I ain't altered a bit i' my opinion. I feel about it just the same as I did at fust. Sandy Muir's goin' to find his captain. It's my belief that he was saved for that 'ere purpose; an' therefore I says to myself, says I, what matters a few days or a few weeks in a business like this 'ere. It ain't worth while, 'cordin' to my thinkin', to bother about the *when.* When Sandy Muir comes a-walkin' into this 'ere cabin, an' I'se expectin' of him every day, I shan't say, 'Sandy, old messmate, how long you ha' been away!' I shall say, 'Sandy, ha' you browt *him?*' An' he'll say"—here Ziah rose up, as if the spirit of prophecy had come upon him as on the seers of the olden time, and bringing timber-toe down with a thump that startled Agnes from her chair—"'Yes, Ziah Quayle, I've browt John Stallibrass. The good Lord saved me for the purpose, an' here he is!'" and turning to the door, he looked as though the latch was being lifted for the two to enter in.

My own duties had called me away to London, although I would gladly have remained at Craigmuir to see if possible the whole course and end of this strange story. The matter was seldom out of my

mind, nowever, for all my sympathies were with the widow and her winsome children, and the good friends and true who were toiling so lovingly and earnestly to kindle anew the glowing brightness of unshadowed home life on the hearthstone of The Cottage by Craigmuir Neb.

One day, while I was looking through the *Times* newspaper, I came to the columns devoted to Foreign Intelligence, and read—

"HONOLULU.—The anniversary of the king's coronation has just been celebrated. The whole city is *en fête*, and business for the time being is all but suspended. Among the shipping in the harbour is the *Highland Lassie*, a splendid yacht, the property of Lord Weyburn, who is cruising in these seas. It is reported that his lordship came hither on a rather singular errand, the discovery of a missing friend. Upon inquiry I find that his lordship has every prospect of success."

Oh how I wished it had said more! I was so much excited by the intelligence that further attention to business was impossible. I determined to write at once to Ziah Quayle. I knew the dear old salt would rejoice over even this brief intimation with a great joy. My communication, purposely brief and simple, was as follows:—

"ZIAH QUAYLE.—DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I have just read in the *Times* newspaper that Lord Weyburn is at Honolulu, and that he has good reason to believe that John Stallibrass will be found. That is all it says, but it gives us hope, and I knew you would be

delighted to hear it. I would send my love to my dear friends at The Cottage, but they must not know I have written.—Believe me, your true and faithful friend, UNCLE RALPH."

I did not add my address, for I knew Ziah's deficiencies in scholarship. My surprise, therefore, was all the greater on receiving his reply. He had managed to fish out my whereabouts by a little clever questioning at The Cottage, and in due time I received the following epistle. I wish I could give the reader a specimen of the caligraphy. It was written in printed characters and must have cost him infinite pains:—

"HONERD SIR,—Bible says, As cold water to a thusty sole, so is gud nuse from a far contry. thenk yore honer, I says, for such a gud drink. it is better than all the trible X in Andro munrow's sellar. Not that I hev ony misdowts the kaptin is comin. God is gud, so no more from yores to komand,

"ZIAH QUALE."

The old tar subsequently informed me that after he received my letter he went to The Cottage and had a little private conversation with Georgie and Trixie.

"Dear bairns," he said, as soon as occasion offered, "are you a-rememberin'?"

"Yes, dear Ziah," said Trixie, with a look of inquiry.

"Every night *and* every mornin'?" asked Ziah in an earnest whisper.

"Yes, every one," said Georgie, impressed. "Is it coming?"

"Is what coming, Georgie?" said the cunning Ziah.

"Mamma's fairin'," was the reply.

"Oh, my darlin's! my darlin's! Please the good Lord, I do think it is!"

At the earliest opportunity Ziah hastened to depart. It was well he did, for if ever mortal man who wore timber-toe was in danger of thumping his own wooden prop to pieces, Ziah Quayle was that man that day!

CHAPTER XL.

RONALD M'LEOD SCORES A POINT; AND SANDY MUIR HAS AN "IDEA."

I CANNOT venture on relating in detail all the interesting incidents connected with that notable voyage. John Stallibrass continued to gather up odd ends of the broken and tangled skein of his shattered memory, but it would not unravel. There was always a reserve, a barrier not to be crossed, and anything like consecutive recollection seemed to be as far away as ever.

New revelations seemed to come to him, as notions, fancies, dreams; they came odd, disjointed, in shreds and patches, the vision for ever blurred and uncertain, and there always seemed a gulf, a gap, between him and his own past that no skill or effort could bridge over, and the battles in the captain's mind produced at times what amounted almost to an agony, and was truly pitiful to see.

Even Ronald and Sandy Muir were regarded more as new friends than old, new friends who realised what he had seen in dreams, and who in the kindness of their heart were helping him to go home. Where his home was he could not tell, nor yet what he expected to find there. "My darlin's, I have seen them in my dreams," that was the extent of his ability to explain.

Ronald managed, partially at least, to tear down the

veil that hid his own identity by employing the *ruse* he had previously adopted. He sketched and coloured his own portrait in a certain familiar office dress such as he wore in the olden days of his commercial life. Then he laid the picture on the cabin table in such wise that John was sure to see it, while he himself was hidden near by.

By and by John Stallibrass entered, picked up the portrait, and gazing at it with a look of delight, he said—

"Why, its Ronnie!"

Ronald's eyes filled with tears at the mention of the dear familiar abbreviation of his name, and he stepped out to shake hands with him just as he used to do on the captain's return from sea, and said, "Hallo! How are you, Honest John? where have you left the *Deucalion*, old fellow?"

"Hearty, my boy, hearty, thank God!" said he, taking the proffered hand.

It was the old warm hand-grip. It was the old ringing laugh. It was the old form of words exactly. This was indeed John Stallibrass. Ronald could hardly stand it. It was just like the dear and happy yesterdays before the blow fell.

But a cloud came over John's face as he laid his hand on Ronald's shoulder and said—

"That's it, laddie, that's it! That's just where my brain cracks. You ask me where I've left the *Deucalion*. Now that's just the thing I want to know. For some days past I have had the notion that I ought to know something about some ship. I've been trying to find out ever so long; but I can't, I can't, I can't!"

The way in which he uttered this would have touched a heart of stone.

"Come and sit beside me," said Ronald. Then again he told him simply and clearly the whole story of the explosion, of his being picked up at sea, his grievous blow on the head, his loss of memory, Mr. Fletcher's kindness, Bella's unremitting care, and Lord Weyburn's object in his cruise to the Southern Seas.

"Thank you," said John Stallibrass, who had listened through the whole story with intense interest. "I am beginning to hope that I may get at it by and by, for God is good. All that you have said to me about Mr. Fletcher's kindness, about dear Bella's loving care and Lord Weyburn's errand, I know and understand, I am *conscious* of it; do you know what I mean? But all that you tell me of what happened before that I don't *know;* I believe it, for you would not say what is not true, but it does not commend itself to my experience. There is for the most part no answer to it in my own mind; I can't endorse it, and say, 'That's true.'

"And yet, at some points, it seems as though I hear old news. There's a ship in my poor foggy mind; and that Sandy Muir, I am conscious of a quickened heart-beat when I think of him. His story should account for it, but my knowledge does *not;* and as for those faces I see at times, almost always now, for I look at this so often"—here he drew from his vest the sketch of Maggie and the children—"how *can* they be so dear to me, the darlings! O my God! shall I, shall I, ever, ever know?"

He walked to and fro across the cabin floor in strong agitation with his hand upon his brow.

"Be calm, John, my brother!" said Ronald. "It is coming. God is good."

"Yes," said he, "that is my sheet anchor; *has* been all the time. Merciful God! bring me light!"

On the deck of the *Highland Lassie*, Bella was holding converse with Sandy Muir, who was in some light duty "abaft the binnacle." Sandy was glad she had given him the opportunity of speaking with her, as for some days past he had been nursing a new idea. The condition of his captain was a source of much distress to him, and the one desire of his simple and affectionate heart was to see him his real old self again, and in full possession of all the noble powers that God had given him.

"I've been a-thinkin', ma'am," said Sandy,—he had not yet realised that it was "your ladyship," and we may depend upon it that it mattered but little just then to Bella,—"I've been a thinkin', ma'am, about my captain; you little knows how often I'm thinkin' about *him!* an' I've been havin' an idea."

"Yes, Sandy, I know," said Bella kindly, "you are always thinking of him, and so are we all; what is your idea?"

"Why, ma'am, you remember as how the doctor said to Mr. Fletcher that my captain might, may be, get back his memory, which has played him such a scurvy trick, if he happened to ha' some sort of a shock, d'ye see, a reg'lar surprisin', somethin' sudden an' onexpected like, that would shake the mischief out of him before he knew."

"Why, Sandy, it is a very good one, that idea of yours, but the difficulty is to tell what way would be best to set about it."

"Well, you see, ma'am, I've been tryin' and tryin' for days past to hammer some sort of thunder-clap out o' my own head; an' I think I've hit upon something that'll kind o' wake him up, an' wake him out o' that there strange onnat'ral dulness all at once. I'se only a poor sort of a chap, I know," continued Sandy, his voice faltering and his honest eyes reddening with deep feeling, "but if I could, oh, if I could, my very ownself do something to save my captain right out an' out, I don't think I should care to live another minnit, if so be as *he* would say, 'Thank you, Sandy,' afore I went."

"Wait a minute, Sandy," said Bella, "just wait a minute."

Her ladyship was much moved, and she determined to further Sandy's aims. So she went to seek her husband and Captain Allan, and brought them to Sandy to hear from his own lips his plan for trying to recall the lost memory of John Stallibrass by means of some sudden alarm.

To them Sandy imparted his scheme. Lord Weyburn and the skipper of the *Highland Lassie* both approved, suggested improvements, and then cordially agreed to help Sandy to try his plan.

"Thank you, captain; thank you, my lord," said Sandy Muir, "them there words o' Dr. Duncan, as Mr. Fletcher mentioned, hev been i' my head ever since I heard, an' there's broad daylight through em' for my captain, I do believe."

Sandy Muir's "idea" was, by the aid of the two small brass cannons kept for signalling and salutes, and a few buckets of burning pitch and tar, to improvise a fire and an explosion on board the *Highland Lassie*. What success might have attended it may never be known. Providence took the matter into His own unerring hands.

CHAPTER XLI.

JOHN STALLIBRASS AND SANDY MUIR COME FACE TO FACE, AND THE PRISONER IS FREE!

HITHERTO the *Highland Lassie* had been sailing homeward over smooth seas and under sunny skies. They had not yet cleared the tropic or semi-tropic zone, and Captain Allan's practised eye perceived sure signs of the approach of one of those fierce and sudden storms that often sweep across these regions, bearing death and destruction in their train.

Far away in the south he saw a cloud "no bigger than a man's hand," and he felt that it was a warning not to be mistaken. He lost no time in shortening and then furling sail. The ship was close reefed, and nothing but bare poles were left to catch the approaching tempest. All hands were on the alert, and Bella was advised to make her temporary home in the lower cabin. The precaution was a wise one, for by and by the tornado or cyclone came sweeping on with all but resistless might, and the *Highland Lassie* seemed to be in the very eye of the storm. The roar and rage of the wind was awful, and the sea, to use the well-worn but telling expression, ran mountains high. Captain Allan himself took the helm, and it required all his muscle and all his management to hold the

yacht from becoming absolutely the sport and plaything of the merciless tempest.

Everything that could be cleared away from the decks was removed in time, and the restful, where need was lashed firmly each to its place. Giant billows leaped clean over the vessel, and rushing seas made her reel and shake and quiver as though her stout, well-bolted timbers must part in the dreadful strain. Ronald and Bella, non-combatants in this fearful fray, were under hatches; Lord Weyburn, himself a brave and capable mariner, did mariner's duty with the rest; and all on board knew that it was neither more nor less than a desperate fight for life.

The combined persuasions of his friends could not induce John Stallibrass to go below. It seemed as though he felt himself to be the commander of the ship, and ever and anon, much to Captain Allan's surprise, he shouted his orders in a voice of thunder. The legitimate captain of the *Highland Lassie,* like the wise, true man he was, knowing that John was right, contented himself with echoing them to the straining crew. Even in that awful hurly-burly Lord Weyburn found himself speculating on the probable influence of this fierce episode on the mind of John Stallibrass, and saw in the storm the direct providence of God.

The struggle was desperate, but brief, sharp, rapid. The wind lulled, the sea fell, fell comparatively quiet, as though it had been unwillingly whipped into temporary activity, and Lord Weyburn said to Captain Allan—

"It's past, I think, Captain Allan! Thank God! But it was a near shave. I thought at one time we were swamped without hope of salvation!"

Captain Stallibrass was standing with his back against the vessel's side. His hat was off, and he was running both hands excitedly through his hair. He seemed to be struggling to give birth to some thought, or rather to break away from subtle bonds. At that moment, a sort of final gust came whistling through the shrouds. A portion of the rigging, which had been dislodged and loosened in the storm, fell suddenly, and in a moment John Stallibrass was floundering in the yeasty sea!

"Man overboard!" shouted Lord Weyburn, and in an instant a life buoy, and then a second, was flung out. Before the second one had rested on the flood, Sandy Muir was breasting the billows, and it fell all but within his instant reach. He saw with joy unspeakable that his captain's rare swimming powers had come back to him by instinct, for he was manfully facing the current and keeping his head above water. The struggle was terrible, for though the heavier seas were gone, the waves were rough and turbulent, and John Stallibrass had not, alas! his olden strength, though his olden skill had come to his help at need.

By the time that a boat was lowered and Lord Weyburn and four sailors had come to the rescue, Sandy Muir had reached and laid hold of the struggling man. So they two met again face to face as once before on a never-to-be-forgotten day. John Stallibrass fixed his eyes on his faithful friend whom *then* at that moment he really knew. "Fling away your knife," said he; "I'll save you that you may be a better man!"

Then he collapsed heavily, and in spite of Sandy's

all but superhuman strength and energy must have gone to the bottom like a stone. But the boat was by, and John Stallibrass was saved.

He was carried to his berth, and once more Bella took her station at his side, just as she had done when he was brought on board her brother's yacht, the *Owhyhee,* exhausted, wounded, all but dead. He lay a while unconscious, spite of loving, kindly care and effort, and when at last he opened his eyes and saw the fair face bending over him, he whispered, just as he had whispered then—

"My darling Maggie, God bless you!"

He closed his eyes through weakness, *not unconsciousness,* and lay still, still and silent, for a little while, and Bella watched and waited, administering a little stimulant occasionally, and hoping all the time. When next he looked at her, it was with surprise.

"You are not Maggie! Bella, dear, I know you; where's my darling?"

"You are on your way to Maggie, dear John, as fast as the *Highland Lassie* can carry you."

On his face there came a light, a glow ineffable; it was a face transfigured. Ronald drew near. John smiled with the old love-light in his eye.

"Ronnie, brother Ronnie, rejoice with me! My soul has come home again! I understand it all! O Ronnie, Ronnie! and sweet sister Bella, for sister of mercy you have been to me, God is good!"

And so it was that the past and the present were linked again together. The subtle cloud which had veiled that clever brain was gone! gone! lifted once for all and for evermore!

Now that the mind was well again, the body was ill, and for many days John Stallibrass lay sick and weak, and only slowly, even under Bella's skilled and gentle treatment, came back his wonted strength.

During those days of slow convalescence he often reverted to his time of darkness.

"I don't know how to put it," he said, "but I have seemed at times to be out of myself, as though my mind acted independently. I knew there were dear ones whom I loved. I felt that they were mourning for me, and I mourned because they mourned. When I saw their faces, strange, spiritual dream-faces, but so sweet, I prayed for them. I could not speak to them, but I pointed them to heaven, and wished, oh so much, that they would believe that God is good."

Did the ministering spirits bear that message, and represent that action to Maggie Stallibrass, I wonder, that stormy evening at Craigmuir? or did his own loving and faithful soul somehow send or carry its own message? Who can answer? Who can gauge the power of soul to commune with or to influence soul? "Whether in the body or out of it, I cannot tell, God knoweth."

When John Stallibrass sent for Sandy Muir, that faithful soul felt himself to be much in the same questionable condition. He took his hand and said—

"Sandy, my lad, I remember all! God bless you. Your debt to me, if you ever had one, has been paid a thousandfold. Thanks, Sandy, thanks, out of a full heart. Friends linked together as we are, are linked for life."

No happier mortal existed in this world at that

moment than Sandy Muir. He retired from the cabin without a word; "My captain!" was on his tongue, but could come no further. His cup was full; he *had* saved *him*, and the purpose for which he himself had been saved was now fulfilled.

After John Stallibras was quite able to join his friends in the cabin again, he requested that they would unite with him in a solemn offering of praise to Almighty God.

"Join me," said he, "in praise to my Maker, my Deliverer. I sat in darkness and the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron. I cried unto the Lord in my trouble, and He delivered me out of my distresses. He hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron asunder. O praise the Lord for His goodness, His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Then he prayed for his dear friends, who felt the benediction of a good man's blessing. He prayed for Maggie, Georgie, Trixie. But his still feeble strength refused to bear the weight of joy which that home-picture brought. He was silent; a holy silence fell on all.

CHAPTER XLII.

HALF A DOZEN CONSPIRATORS HOLD A COUNCIL AT THE FISHERMAN'S ARMS.

At last, long last, the *Highland Lassie* furled her sails in Leith Harbour, and John Stallibrass, the lost, the given up for dead, stood once again, hale and hearty, on his native shores. He would fain have set off on that instant to Craigmuir, but his brother Ronald and Lord Weyburn would not permit him. They and Bella were agreed that the utmost caution would be required in breaking to "the widow" the strange news that her husband, whom she loved so passionately, and mourned for so constantly, was almost at the door, waiting to clasp her to his heart.

Ziah Quayle was commissioned to secure rooms at the "Fisherman's Arms." With what delight timber-toe posted down the main street on this errand!

"Who are they?" quoth Andrew Munro, when Ziah informed him that a party of four tip-top gentlefolks wanted accommodation. Ziah didn't scruple to include Sandy Muir in the description, for, said he, "If he isn't a gentlefolk by name he is by natur' an' practice, an' that's the most genuine coin."

"Why," said Ziah, "it's a secret, landlord. I'll tell you one of 'em, only you had better not let on as you know it. It's Lord Weyburn an' some friends."

With that modicum of information mine host had to be content.

Of course honest Andrew kept Ziah's secret as to the identity of his coming guests. He only told it to his wife and to a few old cronies who were free of the inner bar. His wife only told a few of her better-class neighbours, such as the wife of the draper, grocer, and general dealer, and the chatty old lady who kept the post-office. She declared she would not tell it to anybody; and she did not, except to the travelling postman, Jim, who delivered letters for many a mile around, and who was never known to keep a secret in his life.

The little knot of villagers who used to assemble at the seaward front of the inn, discussed over their pipes the knotty question as to what was bringing Lord Weyburn to Craigmuir. One man suggested that he was bringing "artist friends to paint the Neb, an' hang it up i' the great picture-show i' Lunnun." Another declared that he had heard something about some lord or another who was going to buy Craigmuir and build a fine house upon the Wing. A third hazarded the idea that he was a commissioner from Parliament to inquire into fishermen's grievances. Whereupon they were all agreed that if that was it, they could tell him a thing or two that would open his eyes for him.

From this it appears that even the fishermen at Craigmuir had grievances; and indeed I have never yet come in contact with any living mortal who had not any, if I only had patience enough to find out. It is an Englishman's idol, is a grievance, and it is to

be hoped it will not be interfered with by any grandmotherly legislation. Destroy every grievance to-day, and to-morrow and on the third day it will be a real grievance that there is no grievance left to grumble about; and a few might be suddenly manufactured to relieve the strain.

Up at The Cottage the news had reached, taken possibly by the postman, of Lord Weyburn's visit to Craigmuir. Maggie Stallibrass did not know his lordship, except indeed as the proprietor of Weyburn Glen, and as a friend of Ronald's, so that she was not greatly stirred; Georgie did acknowledge that he had a desire to see a lord, if he was sure he would not hurt him; and Trixie, hearing that, volunteered to let his lordship take hold of dolly by way of disarming him of any designs against her brother. Agnes, on the other hand, having been prepared for it by letter, treated the matter as an affair of small importance, and laughingly joked about "a tempest in a tea-cup." In her heart, however, there was a tempest which would have taken a tremendous tea-cup to contain, a tempest of desire to see her husband, and to see John Stallibrass taking Maggie to his heart.

Meanwhile Lord Weyburn, Lady Weyburn, Ronald M'Leod, Sandy Muir, and John Stallibrass were coming from 'over the hills and far away' to Craigmuir, and, all but the last, felt themselves to be a sort of triumphal procession escorting the hero of a battle bravely fought and won, to the presence of his queen, to receive his due reward.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of John Stallibrass himself. He was always staid and self-

contained; now he was more staid and sober still, and no wonder! The foremost feelings in his heart, the foremost thoughts in his mind, during that journey home were gratitude and love and hope. The expression "God is good," was never so much in favour as now; now that he was coming home from his sad exile; now that he was on the point of greeting Maggie, darling Maggie, and holding that dear head to his faithful heart once more!

It would have been a capital subject for a painter, that room in the Fisherman's Arms where the conspirators sat round a council table; for Agnes had joined them, leaving The Cottage to go a shopping, that woman's broad excuse. The question was, "What is the best way of breaking the news to Mrs. Stallibrass?" It was very difficult to answer. She was not strong, far from it, and this news might well test a giant's strength to withstand its certain whelming rush of joy. At last Sandy Muir suggested that Ziah Quayle, whom the widow so greatly loved and trusted, should go and break the news as gently and carefully as he could. At first Ziah felt inclined to agree with him, not because he felt himself fitted for the work, but because he should at last be able to tell the secret that had almost leaped through his lips in spite of himself. Agnes strongly advised it.

"Maggie loves the old man like a father," said she, "and Ziah's ways are always wise and good."

"Why, you see," he said, "I don't much seem to see my way to it. I know all about tackin' about, off an' on, veerin' here an' steerin' there, an' otherwise shiftin' sail, an' 'bout helm 'cordin' to sarcumstances;

but that's when it's a yacht or a cutter that's i' hand, d'ye see? But when it comes to be the matter of a woman, an' o' such a woman as this 'ere is; an' when it comes to shootin' such a Niagara, such a general, unreg'lar kind of a resurrectioner like this 'ere, why, d'ye see, it's different like, an' to quite a 'strordinary degree.

"Howsomediver," he continued after a pause, "I know the widow—that's what we've always called her, bless her—hez a real honest liking for poor old Ziah, an' I do believe she would listen to me as soon as some folks. Look here!" said he, and thump went timber-toe under the table, startling that portion of the company who were not familiar with its habits in that direction. "Look here! I do think, do you know, that I might get the secret out through the little darlin's, bless em; they loves me, an' I loves them, an"—

"Off you go, Ziah Quayle!" said John Stallibrass, seizing Ziah's glazed hat and putting it on his head for him, to save time. "You're the man to do it. God bless you! I'll soon be after you. Be off! or I'll kiss you before you go!"

Ziah did as he was told, saying, however, as he left the room—

"Why, Captain Stallibrass, it mightn't be amiss if you did. I reckon you'd enjoy the difference wi' the next body you tried it on!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

TRIXIE COMES TO ZIAH QUAYLE'S ASSISTANCE, AND MAMMA'S FAIRIN' COMES TO HAND.

On his way up the hill Ziah conned his lesson, and made up his mind how to conduct the subtle attack which was to end in everybody's victory and in nobody's defeat. As usual, he stumped away at a tremendous rate; but as he neared The Cottage he slackened his pace, not so much because of the hill, but because his mission grew harder the nearer he came to the doing of it.

Poor Ziah! all his well-laid plans of attack left him at the garden gate and as he afterwards declared, he felt like a gunboat with neither powder nor shot on board. As usual, the children came to his relief. No sooner was the familiar sound of the wooden leg heard upon the gravel, than Georgie and Trixie, like two young pirates, bombarded him, captured him, took him in tow, and finally sunk him into the chair in the chimney corner.

"Why, Ziah," said Mrs. Stallibrass, giving him cordial greeting, "you haven't been here for two days. I was about to set off on a pilgrimage to seek you, or the children would soon have been in a condition of hopeless revolt. We can't spare *you* for long, you

know, dear old friend, for both I and they feel like orphans while you are away."

All this was very precious to Ziah's warm heart; but how could he make it help him to fulfil his responsible commission?

"Thank you, ma'am," said he. "Yes, you are always kind to me; but orphans, eh? Why, you know, you can hardly be a orphan, ma'am, now, can you?"

"Why not, Ziah?" said the widow, with a smile; "my dear father is dead. I suppose you think I'm too old."

"Oh no, ma'am, no! Bless your heart, 'cordin' to my thinkin', your birthdays counts back'ards, ay, an' the almanac likewise, for I'm blessed if you don't grow younger every week! But you see, you see, ma'am," stammered Ziah, who would find a way out of the wood, "you see, *he might come back again!*"

The widow looked hard at him, half inclined to wonder if he and Andrew Munro had been lunching together. Ziah felt he was putting his foot into it somehow. She said sadly—

"Alas! no; the dead cannot return again."

"Can't they, though?" said Ziah, "yes, they can, ay, when you least expect 'em."

"Yes, Ziah," said Trixie, "just as you've done, eh? 'cause you always come in an afternoon, an' now you've come in a morning."

Poor Ziah! He found he had only crept up a blind alley, and became silent; and Mrs. Stallibrass looked at him again with some surprise.

But his instincts were right, and John Stallibrass

was right to trust him. All unwittingly Trixie came to his relief.

"Dear Ziah," said she, climbing his knee, "when will you bring mamma her fairin'? Me an' Georgie did tell God to help you, an' I wants to know when it's coming."

"Well, my darlin'," said Ziah, "it is comin' at last. Now tell me what does Trixie think mamma would like best?"

Trixie looked at Ziah, then at mamma, then at Georgie for inspiration, but in vain. Then she explored the walls; and at last her eye rested on a picture of the *Deucalion* which hung above the door.

"O dear Ziah, I know, something in a ship!"

"Why, what, Trixie?"

Trixie sought the walls again. Her dear blue eyes rested on the portrait of John Stallibrass. With a child's heedless impulse, she pointed at it; then suddenly remembering that the dead don't come back, she dropped her finger, dropped her fair little head, and hid it in Ziah's bosom.

From the widow came a heavy sigh. Ziah Quayle had a lump in his throat, but the time was come!

"Dear Trixie," said he, tenderly and slowly, "I want you to listen to me. Georgie, will you listen to me? I once saw a ship go out of port wi' colours flyin' an' sails all trim, an' the ship went sailin' a long, long way off; an' the great winds an' the big seas set themselves to swallow it up; and then everybody said, 'The ship's gone down! gone down! gone down, down, to the bottom of the sea.'

"And then—Trixie, are you listenin'? are you listen-

in', Georgie?—I went to the port another day, an' I saw that ship that folks said had gone down, down, down; an' there it was again, Trixie! There it was, George! colours flyin' an' sails all trim, and everybody safe an' sound. An' I goes up to the captain, an' I says, 'Captain! I thought you was gone down!' an' the captain"—here Ziah's voice became louder, but broken and uncertain—"the captain, d'ye hear, Trixie? the captain, d'ye hear, Georgie? yes, Mrs. Stallibrass! the very captain his own self, said, 'So I thought too, Ziah Quayle, but *God is good!*'"

The widow had kept her eye fixed on Ziah. She had been puzzled by his restless movements, the stammering way he talked of her husband coming back. All through the story of the ship his voice, his eye, his quick looks at her, excited her, made her think she knew not what. No sooner did Ziah utter the last three words and look her straight in the face, his own face radiant and true as that of a prophet, than she left her seat, put her ice-cold hand in his, and said in tones so stern that Ziah would have blenched but for his inspiring fact —

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ZIAH QUAYLE?"

"I mean—oh my dear, my dear—that God is good, better ten thousand million times than all our fears! Ask Him to help you, for IT'S TRUE!"

The revelation came. A great cry broke from her, a cry that brought her husband to her side just as a friendly swoon broke the rush of the exultant flood. She came back to sweet and rapturous life again, to find her head laid on her husband's heart, and to hear

from his lips the sweetest music under heaven. "My wife! Maggie! my darling wife!"

None others came that night to break in upon the holy sanctity of that hearthstone. Quiet, perfect quiet, all through the night, for Maggie Stallibrass was weak and pale and still; but the ebb and flow of light and life and love came and went through all her being in soft ecstasy. It was a silent feast partaken through her eyes, eyes which saw nothing, nothing but the noble features of John Stallibrass and the soul beneath them—yes, saw also a gracious God besides, else why did she whisper with a pathos so ineffable—

"*God is good!*"

CHAPTER XLIV.

A "COTTAGE INTERIOR:" ZIAH QUAYLE TALKS TO THE NEB; AND SANDY MUIR HAS A WORD WITH ZIAH.

THE morning came. The sun that shone in upon the hearthstone of The Cottage, shone upon an Eden of peace and joy. Maggie Stallibrass had slept at last, and awoke to find that what she feared was but a delicious dream was true, true, for by her side her husband sat with both his children on his knee. Georgie's arms were clasped about his father's neck; Trixie's fair head was leaning on his breast, and her hand was toying with his beard. Then Maggie rose from her pillow, strong and calm, and knew that life and light and love had come again to make her heart and hearth their home.

During the morning came her brother Ronald and his Agnes to look upon their transfigured sister and rejoice. Then came Weyburn and Bella. The fair bride surpassed herself in the deft and ready way in which she crept into Maggie's open heart, and the two children fell in love with her on the spot. His lordship was *not* loquacious as he sat observing the re-united pair. He stroked his long beard and his bald pate in turn; he managed to assure Mrs. Stallibrass that the *Highland Lassie* had won its crowning

honour as the finest yacht in Europe in bringing John safe home again.

Then came Sandy Muir, to be presented to her by her husband as the man, the friend, that had found him and saved him at the risk of his life. Maggie took the rough, brown hand, and bent her lips upon it, and left a tear there, and Sandy blushed and retired into the background, followed by his captain's eye, and saw in that all that his faithful heart desired.

And last, not least, came Ziah Quayle. To him the little Beatrice addressed herself as she clung around him—

"Oh, dear Ziah! God has done what Ziah wants to. Papa's mamma's fairin', but he's mine and Georgie's too."

"Yes, my darlin'," said Ziah tenderly. "It's come at last, an' you can all share an' share alike. Trixie, my sweet, that bit o' prayer evenin' *and* mornin', that did it, thank God."

Coming forward to receive the greetings of old Ziah, Maggie Stallibrass took his hand in hers, laid it on her palm and stroked it tenderly and lovingly.

"True and faithful friend," she said, "no word of mine can tell how truly my heart says, Thank you, thank you, dear Ziah, for all your goodness to the poor widow, and for all you have done, you and Sandy Muir, to make me once again the richest, happiest wife in all the world."

"There, there, ma'am. Hush! if you will be so good. I can't stand it. I feel just like a frigate without ballast or cargo in a lively sea. I 'spects every minute to go off up into mid air like a balloon. Just

let me have one good burst out! I've kept this 'ere secret till it's kind o' gi'en me the cramp i' my in'ards. I'll go into the garden."

Into the garden posted timber-toe, and in a few moments the whole party was drawn to the window; for there was Ziah waving his hat above and around his head, and shouting, not a make-believe shout this time, but with all the strength of his lungs, "Captain Stallibrass is come home, come home, come home! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

And then, by way of a satisfactory finish, he shook his hand at the Neb that towered into the blue heavens, and with no vestige of a "night cap" on his kingly crown, and said—

"There! you've got it now; an' you may take it and tell it to all mankind!"

The whole party were gathered again in The Cottage. Lord and Lady Weyburn were about to start for Weyburn Castle, and Ziah Quayle and Sandy had a "bit o' business" in the village.

"Now, good friends and true," said John Stallibrass, "friends whose names and doings are written on my heart for ever, here in my own house, on my own hearthstone; here in the presence of my wife, my glorious wife, and of my darling children, our wealth, our riches, and as in the presence of my God, I thank you all, God only knows how deeply and how much. Before we part, part only for a little while, God willing, for I hope such love and intercourse will last for life, I want you to help me, here under my home roof and with my treasures around me, treasures so long lost to me, I want you to join me in thanks to God."

Opening the Book which above all others John Stallibrass loved and honoured, he read—

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless and praise His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;

Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy;

He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is higher than the earth, so great is His mercy to them that fear Him.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

The inspired and holy words were read, not without much difficulty on the part of the reader, whose voice more than once all but failed him; not without quiet tears among the listeners, as they looked from him to Maggie, from Maggie to him, and read the hearts of both.

"Then kneeling down, to heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays."

And in that holy hour every bending worshipper said in their hearts "Amen" to John Stallibrass's testimony, "God is good!"

On that same evening Ziah Quayle and Sandy Muir were seated by the Cabin fire, for as a matter of course Sandy repaired to his old quarters, for in that matter Ziah was not the man to be said nay.

At first conversation was not by any means either ready or lively. Both of them seemed to be silenced, half-burdened with the weight and wonder of their own success.

Sandy Muir sat in Ziah's easy-chair. He had protested against that arrangement.

"Sit in it yourself, comrade," said Sandy. "*I* think nobody ought to take it from the likes o' you. I'd rather sit on the floor at your feet, messmate."

"You wouldn't ha' said that," said Ziah lightly, to put his guest at ease, "if you'd gotten such a thing as a wooden leg spliced on to you. Timber-toe'll help you to go down if you don't manage him rightly, but as for gettin' up again when you are down, why, d'ye see, he's a habit o' gettin' i' the way. I'm a-goin' to sit here," said he, settling himself down upon the famous sea-chest, "an' I tell you, considerin' all the sarcumstances that's gone along with it, I'd rayther sit on it than on a throne o' gold.

"Ay, Sandy, lad," he continued, "it was a grand day when God's marcy wouldn't let me give up handlin' your poor limp body on the beach under Craigmuir Neb. 'Let him alone, Ziah,' said one o' the lads, 'all he wants is a coffin an' a decent grave.' But I *felt* it wasn't true; an' it wasn't, old friend, an' praise the good

Lord, here you are; an' John Stallibrass is up at The Cottage wi' his wife; an' you an me's a couple o' plain Jack Tars that's about as happy an' content as anything that walks aboveground."

Sandy Muir's face was aglow, but there was on it a solemnity as he replied—

"An' you says, Ziah, says you, 'God's providence knows what He's about, an' them as is saved is saved for some purpose or other, though we mayn't be able ezac'ly to see the run of it.' An' then *I* says, says I, 'Then I know what *I'm* saved for,' an' now, through God Almighty's marcy, I've gone an' been an' done it, an' I thanks my God an' Ziah Quayle this night an' thro' all etarnity when I thinks o' *him!*"

The two sailors proceeded to rig up a berth for Sandy's use, and then they retired to rest; and if ever sleepers did, they slept the sleep of the just.

CHAPTER XLV.

HAS A KINDLY AND FINAL WORD TO SAY ABOUT ALL AND SUNDRY.

Now that John Stallibrass himself had returned to look after his own affairs, he was soon able to put his finances into a prosperous condition. Had his wife been so minded he could have built himself another *Deucalion* and gone to sea again in hope of a rich reward. But of this Maggie would not hear one word, and who can wonder? She had surely suffered enough, and so had he for whom she suffered, from perils by the sea. So her husband confined himself to mercantile pursuits on shore. In a little while he was again the owner of more than one gallant ship, on one of which, for a while, Sandy Muir held a favoured place.

They felt that The Cottage must not be given up. Maggie especially clung to it as the home of so many tender memories, the spot which had witnessed alike the greatest sorrow and the greatest joy of her life. So John Stallibrass enlarged it and beautified it into an attractive and comfortable marine residence. He and Lord Weyburn induced the authorities of Trinity House to build a lighthouse on the Ridge; he himself built and equipped a lifeboat called the *John and Maggie*, and gave it to that great Society whose mag-

nificent mission of mercy is one of the greatest glories of our land.

Sandy Muir, much to his delight, was appointed keeper of the lifeboat and captain of the hardy crew that manned it. He and Ziah Quayle resided together in the Cabin, and that cosy corner was all the cosier for their mutual companionship, and Sandy felt, as he bravely performed his high and holy duty, that his life was saved for a noble purpose still. I need not say that both were frequent and honoured guests at The Cottage, and that its happy inmates found abiding pleasure in ministering to their comfort and content.

Ronald M'Leod and Agnes settled down again at The Hermitage, where he pursued his artistic career with great success. The honours of an A.R.A. came to him swiftly; and John Stallibrass was proved a true prophet, for the portrait of Mrs. Baird was hung upon the walls of the Academy in all the glories of bright colours and brighter gilding; and when Mr. Baird was once more chosen Provost of Dundee, he also found a place, invested with gown and chain and badge, on the walls of the same far-famed halls of art. They were eminently proud of their clever son-in-law, and, as may well be believed, the happy Agnes was all the happier for that.

Lord Weyburn settled down, as he had promised, at Weyburn Castle, and in the management of his large estate, with which Dunwraith was now united, found abundant scope for his superfluous energies, and in the Upper House his natural loquacity had a fair field and a good deal of favour too. Bella, or Lady

Weyburn, as she is now more fitly called, found a congenial field in ministering to the requirements of the poor who dwelt around them, with happy episodes in the visits of the inmates of The Hermitage, The Cottage, and the Cabin, and more than once of Fletcher's Farm itself.

Of all the paths and byeways around Craigmuir, none were so often trod by John and Maggie Stallibrass than the Wing, which leads direct from The Cottage along the rocky cliff up to the noble Neb. Hither they take their evening stroll, and as they gaze seaward on the black and frowning Ridge, and watch the waves breaking in white foam around it, they do not forget to pray for all in peril on the sea, and, pondering on their happy reunion in spite of all that hindered, to say, with tearful eyes and grateful hearts, "God is good."

My own annual visit to Craigmuir is now doubly attractive. Indeed, I for the most part reside there; for in addition to the peculiar charms and health-giving air of the neighbourhood itself, Ziah Quayle, Sandy Muir, and John and Maggie Stallibrass are all entered on my list of friends.

Georgie and Beatrice dearly like to visit the Cabin, and find loving welcome from both the sailors who there reside. Ziah's delight on such occasions is something wonderful to see. Georgie will seat himself on the historical sea-chest; Trixie still insists on a seat on Ziah's knee or by his side; Ziah spins his famous yarns, and it is hard to say whether he or his young friends enjoy it most. But of all the yarns which the old tar loves to spin, his favourite story, told

to all and sundry, and ever fresh all round the year, is the stirring story of Honest John Stallibrass; and he winds it up invariably by saying, reverently and earnestly—

"GOD IS GOOD."

THE END.

BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

78 & 80 KING STREET EAST,

TORONTO.

By the Rev. John Lathern, D.D.

The Macedonian Cry. A Voice from the Lands of Brahma and Buddha, Africa and Isles of the Sea, and A Plea for Missions. 12mo, cloth $0 70

The Hon. Judge Wilmot, late Lieut.-Governor of New Brunswick. A Biographical Sketch. Introduction by the Rev. D. D. Currie. With Artotype portrait. Clo., 12mo. 0 75

Baptisma. Exegetical and Controversial. Cloth, 12mo.... 0 75

By the Rev. E. Barrass, M.A.

Smiles and Tears; or, Sketches from Real Life. With Introduction by the Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D. Bound in cloth, gilt edges, extra gilt 0 50

By the Rev. J. Cynddylan Jones.

Studies in Matthew. 12mo, cloth. (Canadian Copyright Edition) 1 25

"This is a remarkable volume of Sermons. The style, while severly logical, reminds us in its beauty and simplicity of Ruskin. These are models of what pulpit discourses ought to be."—*Methodist Recorder.*

Studies in Acts. 12mo, cloth..... 1 50

"No exaggeration to say that Mr. Jones is fully equal to Robertson at his best, and not seldom superior to him."—*Methodist Recorder.*

Studies in Gospel of St. John. 12mo, cloth 1 50

By the Rev. J. Jackson Wray.

Honest John Stallibrass. Illustrated, 12mo, cloth $1 00

Matthew Mellowdew; A Story with More Heroes than One. Illustrated. Cloth, $1.00. Extra gilt 1 25

"In Matthew Mellowdew, the advantages and happiness of leading a Christian life are urged in an earnest and affecting style."—*Irish Times.*

Paul Meggit's Delusion. Illustrated. Cloth $1 00

"A strong and heartily-written tale, conveying sound moral and religious lessons in an unobjectionable form."—*Graphic.*

Nestleton Magna; A Story of Yorkshire Methodism. Illustrated. Cloth 1 00

"No one can read it without feeling better for its happy simple piety; full of vivacity, and racy of the genuine vernacular of the District."—*Watchman.*

By the Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., F.R.S.C

Canadian in Europe. Being Sketches of Travel in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Belguim, Great Britain and Ireland. Illustrated. Cloth, 12mo 1 25

"Valeria," the Martyr of the Catacombs. A Tale of Early Christian Life in Rome. Illustrated. Cloth 0 75

"The subject is skillfully handled, and the lesson it conveys is noble and encouraging."—*Daily Chronicle.*

"A vivid and realistic picture of the times of the persecution of the Early Christians under Diocletian."—*Watchman.*

"The Story is fascinatingly told, and conveys a vast amount of information."—*The Witness.*

King's Messenger; or, Lawrence Temple's Probation. 12mo, cloth 0 75

"A capital story. . . We have seldom read a work of this kind with more interest, or one that we could recommend with greater confidence."—*Bible Christian Magazine.*

Neville Trueman, the Pioneer Preacher. A Tale of the War of 1812. 12mo, cloth. Illustrated 0 75

Methodist Worthies. Cloth, 12mo, 165 pp 0 60

Romance of Missions. Cloth, 12mo, 160 pp 0 60

Great Preachers. Ancient and Modern. Cloth, 12mo 0 60

Intemperance; Its Evils and their Remedies. Paper 0 15

Is Alcohol Food? Paper, 5c., per hundred 3 00

Prohibition the Duty of the Hour. Paper, 5c., per hundred . 3 00

The Bible and the Temperance Question. Paper 0 10

The Liquor Traffic. Paper 0 05

The Physiological Effects of Alcohol. Paper 0 10

Popular History of Canada. 600 pp., 8vo. Eight Steel Portraits, One Hundred Wood Cuts, and Six Coloured Maps. Sold only by Subscription 3 00

By the Rev. J. S. Evans.

Christian Rewards; or, I. The Everlasting Rewards for Children Workers; II. The Antecedent Millennial Reward for Christian Martyrs. With notes:—1. True Christians may have Self-love but not Selfishness; 2. Evangelical Faith-works; 3. Justification by Faith does not include a Title to Everlasting Reward. 12mo, cloth 0 50

The One Mediator. Selections and Thoughts on the Propitiatory Sacrifice and Intercessions of our Great High-Priest. 12mo, cloth 1 00

By the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D., LL.D.

Loyalists of America and Their Times. 2 Vols., large 8vo, with Portrait. Cloth, $5; half morocco $7 00

Canadian Methodism; Its Epochs and Characteristics. Handsomely bound in extra cloth, with Steel Portrait of the Author. 12mo, cloth, 440 pp 1 25

The Story of My Life. Edited by Rev. Dr. Nelles, Rev. Dr. Potts, and J. George Hodgins, Esq., LL.D. With Steel Portrait and Illustrations. (Sold only by Subscription.) Cloth, $3; sheep 4 00

By the Rev. Wm. Arthur, M.A.

Life of Gideon Ouseley. Cloth 1 00

All are Living. An attempt to Prove that the Soul while Separate from the Body is Consciously Alive. Each, 3c., per hundred 2 00

Did Christ Die for All? Each, 3c.; per hundred..... 2 00

Free, Full, and Present Salvation. Each, 3c.; per hundred 2 00

Heroes. A Lecture delivered before the Y.M.C.A. in Exeter Hall, London. Each, 5c.; per hundred 3 00

Is the Bible to Lie Under a Ban in India? A Question for Christian Electors. Each, 3c.; per hundred 2 00

May we Hope for a Great Revival. Each, 3c.; per hundred. 2 00

Only Believe. Each, 3c.; per hundred 2 00

The Christian Raised to the Throne of Christ. Each, 3c.; per hundred 2 00

The Conversion of All England. Each, 3c.; per hundred.. 2 00

The Duty of Giving Away a Stated Portion of Your Income. each, 5c.; per hundred..... 3 00

The Friend whose Years do not Fail. Each, 3c.; per hundred 2 00

By the Rev. W. M. Punshon, D.D., LL.D.

Lectures and Sermons. Printed on thick superfine paper, 378 pp., with fine Steel Portrait, and strongly bound in extra fine cloth $1 00

This volume contains some of Dr. Punshon's grandest Lectures and Sermons, which have been listened to by tens of thousands who will remember them as brilliant productions from an acknowledged genius.

Canada and its Religious Prospects. Paper 0 05

Memorial Sermons. Containing a Sermon, each, by Drs. Punshon, Gervase Smith, J. W. Lindsay, and A. P. Lowrey. Paper, 25c.; cloth 0 35

Tabor; or, The Class-meeting. A Plea and an Appeal. Paper, each 5c.; per dozen 0 30

The Prodigal Son, Four Discourses on. 87 pages. Paper, cover, 25c.; cloth 0 35

The Pulpit and the Pew: Their Duties to each other and to God. Two Addresses. Paper cover, 10c.; cloth. 0 45

By the Rev. E. H. Dewart, D.D.

Broken Reeds; or, The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren. New and enlarged edition 0 10

High Church Pretentions Disproved; or, Methodism and the Church of England 0 10

Living Epistles; or, Christ's Witnesses in the World. 12mo, cloth, 288 pp 1 00

Rev. Dr. A. C. GEORGE, in the New York *Christian Advocate*, says:—"These are, without exception, admirable essays, clear, earnest, logical, convincing, practical, and powerful. They are full of valuable suggestions for ministers, teachers, class-leaders, and all others who desire to present and enforce important biblical truths."

The New York *Observer* says:—"The essays are practical, earnest, and warm, such as ought to do great good, and the one on Christianity and Scepticism is very timely and well put."

Misleading Lights. A Review of Current Antinomian Theories—The Atonement and Justification, 3c.; per dozen 0 30

Songs of Life. A Collection of Original Poems. Cloth 0 75

Spurious Catholicity. A Reply to the Rev. James Roy 0 10

The Development of Doctrine. Lecture delivered before the Theological Union, Victoria College 0 20

What is Arminianism? with a Brief Sketch of Arminius. By Rev. D. D. Whedon, D.D., LL.D., with Introduction by Dr. Dewart 0 10

Waymarks; or, Counsels and Encouragements to Penitent Seekers of Salvation, 5c.; per hundred 3 00

By the Rev. J. C. Seymour.

The Temperance Battlefield, and How to Gain the Day. Illustrated. 12mo, cloth $0 65

Voices from the Throne; or, God's Call to Faith and Obedience. Cloth 0 50

By the Rev. Alex. Sutherland, D.D.

A Summer in Prairie-Land. Notes of Tour through the North-West Territory. Paper, 40 cts.; cloth 0 70

Erring Through Wine 0 05

By the Rev. George H. Cornish.

Cyclopædia of Methodism in Canada. Containing Historical, Educational, and Statistical Information, dating from the beginning of the work in the several Provinces in the Dominion of Canada, with Portrait and Illustrations. Cloth, $4.50; sheep 5 00

Pastor's Record and Pocket Ritual. Russia limp, 75 cents. Roan, with flap and pocket 0 90

By the Rev. W. J. Hunter, D.D.

The Pleasure Dance and its Relation to Religion and Morality 0 10

Popular Amusements 0 10

By John Ashworth.

Strange Tales from Humble Life. First series. 12mo, 470 pp., cloth 1 00

Strange Tales from Humble Life. Second series, cloth 0 45

By the Rev. H. F. Bland.

Soul-Winning. A Course of Four Lectures delivered at Victoria University 0 30

Universal Childhood Drawn to Christ. With an Appendix containing remarks on the Rev. Dr. Burwash's "Moral Condition of Childhood." Paper 0 10

By the Rev. John Carroll, D.D.

Case and His Contemporaries. A Biographical History of Methodism in Canada. 5 vols., cloth $4 90
Father Corson; being the Life of the late Rev. Robert Corson. 12mo, cloth 0 90
"My Boy Life." Presented in a Succession of True Stories. 12mo, cloth, 300 pp 1 00
Water Baptism. Paper 0 10
Exposition Expounded, Defended and Supplemented. Limp cloth 0 40
School of the Prophets, Father McRorey's Class, and Squire Firstman's Kitchen Fire 0 75
Thoughts and Conclusions of a Man of Years, Concerning Churches and Church Connection. Paper 0 05

By the Rev. S. G. Phillips, M.A.

The Evangelical Denominations of the Age 0 15
The need of the World. With Introduction by the Rev. S. S. Nelles, D.D., LL.D. Cloth 1 00
The Methodist Pulpit. A Collection of Original Sermons from Living Ministers of the United Methodist Church in Canada. Edited by the Rev. S. G. Phillips 1 25

By the Rev. Hugh Johnston, M.A., B.D.

Toward the Sunrise. Being Sketches of Travel in the East. Illustrated. To which is added a Memorial Sketch of Rev. W. M. Punshon, LL.D., with Portrait. 460 pp., 12mo, cloth 1 25
The Practical Test of Christianity. A Sermon delivered before the Theological Union, Victoria College, 1883 .... 0 20

Prize Essay on Missions.

The Heathen World: Its Need of the Gospel, and the Church's Obligation to Supply It. By Rev. Geo. Patterson, D.D. Price, 12mo., cloth 0 70

By the Rev. George Sexton, M.A., LL.D.

Biblical Difficulties Dispelled. Being an Answer to Queries Respecting So-Called Discrepancies in Scripture, Misunderstood and Misinterpreted Texts, etc., etc. 12mo, cloth 1 00
History's Testimony to Christ. A Discourse preached in St. Augustine's Church, Clapham, England, 1877. New and Revised Edition. Paper, net 0 20

Aldersyde. A Border Story of Seventy Years Ago. By Annie S. Swan. Illustrated, 12mo, cloth extra, 318 pp.. $1 25

Jock Halliday, a Grass-Market Hero; or, Sketches of Life and Character in an Old City Parish. By Robina F. Hardy. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, 192 pp 0 65

William and Mary. A Tale of the Siege of Louisburg, 1745. By David Hickey. 12mo, cloth, 317 pp 1 00

From Wealth to Poverty; or, The Tricks of the Traffic. A Story of the Drink Curse. By Rev. Austin Potter. 12mo, cloth. 328 pp 0 90

The Old Vice and the New Chivalry. Ammunition for the "Scott Act Campaign." By I. Templeton-Armstrong. 12mo, cloth, 178 pp., illustrated 0 75

The Acme Sabbath-School Reader and Reciter. This is the latest and best Sabbath-School Reader Reciter and Dialogue Book published. It contains 192 pp. of the choicest material—*all usable* 0 35

Anecdotes of the Wesleys. By Rev. J. B. Wakeley. With Introduction by Rev. J. McClintock, D.D., LL.D. 12mo, cloth. With a Portrait. 391 pp..... ..... 1 00

Heroes of Methodism. Containing Sketches of Eminent Methodist Ministers. By Rev. J. B. Wakeley. 12mo, cloth, 470 pp..... 1 00

Counsels to Young Converts. Abridged from Dr. Wise's "Convert's Counsellor." By Rev. A. Sutherland, D.D. 18mo, cloth, 180 pp 0 30

Wesley's Doctrinal Standards. The Sermons, Analysis and Notes. By Rev. N. Burwash, S.T.D. 8vo, cloth 2 50

Bits from Blinkbonny; or, The Bell O' The Manse. A Tale of Scottish Village Life between 1841 and 1851. Six Original Illustrations. By John Strathesk. 12mo, cloth 1 25

Happy Hours. A Book for the Young. With Hundreds of Pictures. 4to, boards..... 0 60

Wandering Lights. A Stricture on the Doctrines and Methods of Brethrenism. By Rev. R. Strachan. Paper 0 10

The Gospel of Mark. (From Teacher's Edition of Revised New Testament.) With Marginal Passages, Etc., Etc., including Three Colored Maps of Palestine. Paper, 15c.; cloth 0 50

Studies in Book of Mark. For Teachers, Pastors, and Parents. By Rev. D. C. Hughes, A.M. 8vo, paper, 60c.; cloth $1 00

The Gospel to the Poor vs. Pew Rents. By B. F. Austin, B.D. Introduction by Dr. Carman. Paper, 25c.; cloth 0 35

Golden Wedding-Day; or, Semi-Centennial Pulpit and Pew of Richmond Street Methodist Church, Toronto. By Rev. Isaac Tovell, M.A. Paper 0 25

Immersion. Proved to be not a Scriptural Mode of Baptism but a Romish Invention, etc. By Rev. W. A. McKay, B.A. With Appendix—"A Reviewer Reviewed." Paper, 25c.; cloth $0 50

Two Fundamental Errors in the Teaching of Plymouth Brethren. By Rev. T. G. Williams. Each 2c.; per doz. 0 20

Why I am a Methodist. Paper, 2c.; per doz 0 20

A Wesleyan Methodist's Thonghts—About Prayer, the Bible, Baptism, The Covenant, The Lord's Supper, etc., etc. Paper 0 05

Renewing the Covenant. Each 5c.; per 100 ..... 3 00

Advice to One who Meets in Class. By Rev. Robert Newstead. Each 3c.; per doz 0 30

Relation of Children to the Fall, the Atonement, and the Church. By N. Burwash, S.T.D. Paper 0 15

Scripture Baptism. Per 100 ..... 0 50

Rules of Society. Per 100 ..... 0 50

With Scripture Proofs Per 100 ..... 1 50

With Trial Ticket Combined. Per 100 ..... 1 00

Church Class-Books. With Pocket for Tickets 0 20

Model Deed Blanks. For Church Property. Per Sèt of Two 0 20

Permits to Sell Church Property—Blanks. Per Set of Two 0 10

Declaration to Fill Vacancies on Trustee Boards. Per Set of Two 0 10

Declaration to Increase Number of Trustees. Per Set of Two 0 10

Model Deed Act. Containing Statutes of Canada, also Statutes of Ontario, Respecting the Methodist Church. Paper 0 25

Discipline. Cloth, 60c.; limp French morrocco 1 00

Lectures and Sermons delivered before the Theological Union of Victoria College.

Members One of Another. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Nelles ....
The Genesis, Nature, and Results of Sin. Lecture by Rev. N. Burwash, S.T.D. Paper 0 20

The Development of Doctrine. Lecture by Rev. E. H. Dewart, D.D .....
The Work of Christ. Sermon by Rev. E. A. Stafford. Paper 0 20

The Cherubim. Lecture by Rev. W. Jeffers, D.D .....
The Ordering of Human Life. Sermon by Rev. W. W. Ross. Paper 0 20

The Obligations of Theology to Science. Lecture by Rev. A. Burns, D.D., LL.D., ...
The Divine Call to the Ministry. Sermon by Rev. E. B. Ryckman, D.D. Paper 0 20

Certainties in Religion. Lecture by Rev. J. A. Williams, D.D.
The Soul's Anchor. Sermon by Rev. George McRitchie. Paper 0 20

Sin and Grace. Lecture by Rev. James Graham .....
The Practical Test of Christianity. Sermon by Rev. Hugh Johnston, M.A., B.D. Paper 0 20

Eternal Punishment. Lecture by Rev. W. I. Shaw, M.A., LL.B .....
The Coming One. Sermon by Rev. W. R. Parker, M.A. Paper 0 20

Lectures and Sermons. From 1879 to 1882. In One Volume. Cloth 0 75

The Life of "Chinese" Gordon, R.E., C.B. With Portrait on the title-page. By Charles H. Allen, F.R.G.S., Secretary of British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Post-free 0 05

"A GREAT BOOK."

The Natural Law in the Spiritual World. By Henry Drummond, F.R.C.E., F.G.S. 414 pp. New Edition Ready 1 75

"This is every way a remarkable work, worthy of the thoughtful study of all who are interested in the great question now pending as to the relations of natural science to revealed religion. . . A mine of practical and suggestive illustrations."—*Living Church.*

Father Lambert's Notes on Ingersoll. Paper, 20c.; cloth 0 50

"It is a masterly refutation of Ingersoll. It should be widely circulated."—Rev. T. G. Williams, President Montreal Conference.

Aggressive Christianity. 12mo, cloth, 60 cts; paper 0 35
Godliness. By Mrs. Catharine Booth. With Introduction by Daniel Steele, D.D. 12mo, cloth, 60c.; paper 0 35

Applied Logic. By the Rev. S. S. Nelles, LL.D. Cloth.. 0 75
Arrows in the Heart of the King's Enemies; or Atheistic Errors of the Day Refuted, and the Doctrine of a Personal God Vindicated. By the Rev. Alexander W. McLeod, D.D. formerly editor of the *Wesleyan*, Halifax, N.S., 12mo, cloth 0 45

Burial in Baptism. A Colloquy, in which the Claims of Ritual Baptism in Romans vi. 3, 4, Colossians ii. 12 are examined and Shown to be Visionary. By the Rev. T. L. Wilkinson. Paper, 5c.; per hundred $3 00

Catechism of Baptism. By the Rev. D. D. Currie. Cloth. 0 50

Certainties of Religion. By the Rev. J. A. Williams, D.D., F.T.L., and The Soul's Anchor. By the Rev. George McRitchie 0 20

Christian Perfection. By the Rev. J. Wesley. Paper, 10c.; cloth 0 20

Church Membership; or, The Conditions of New Testament and Methodist Church Membership Examined and Compared. By the Rev. S. Bond, Methodist Minister of the Montreal Conference. 18mo, cloth, 72 pp. 0 35

Circuit Register 1 50

Class-Leader, The; His Work and How to Do it. By J. Atkinson, M.A. Cloth, 12mo, cheap edition 0 60

"It is practical, sprightly, devout, and full of profit. We would urge every class-leader to possess himself of a copy."—*Christian Guardian.*

Class-Meeting, The. Its Spiritual Authority and Practical Value. By the Rev. J. A. Chapman, M.A 0 10

Conversations on Baptism. By the Rev. Alexander Langford. Cloth 0 30

Companion to the Revised New Testament. By Alexander Roberts, D.D., and an American Reviser. Paper, 30c.; cloth 0 65

The Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D. By George Smith, C.J.E., LL.D., Author of "The Life of John Wilson, D.D., F.R.S.," Fellow of the Royal Geographical and Statistical Society, &c., with an Introduction by Wm. M. Taylor, D.D. Two large octavo volumes, bound in cloth, with Portraits by Jeens 3 00

Journal of the General Conference, for the years 1874, 1878, and 1882. Paper, 60c.; cloth 0 75

Journal of First United General Conference, 1883. Paper, 70c.; cloth 1 00

Lectures and Sermons. Delivered before the "Theological Union" of the University of Victoria College. 1879 to 1882 inclusive, in one volume, cloth 0 75

The above may be had separately, in paper covers, each.. 0 20

Librarian's Account Book 0 50

Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D. Written by himself. 12mo, cloth, with Portrait 1 00

Lone Land Lights. By the Rev. J. McLean. Cloth 0 35

Memories of James B. Morrow. By the Rev. A. W. Nicholson. Cloth 0 75

Memorials of Mr. and Mrs. Jackson. With Steel Portrait. Cloth $0 35

Methodist Catechisms. No. 1., per dozen, 25c.; No. II., per dozen, 60c.; No III., per dozen, 75c. Three in one. Cloth. Each 0 25

Methodist Hymn-Books. In various sizes and styles of binding. Prices from 30 cents upwards.

Old Christianity against Papal Novelties. By Gideon Ouseley, Illustrated. Cloth..... 1 00

Prayer and its Remarkable Answers. By W. W. Patton, D.D. Cloth..... 1 00

Recreations. A Book of Poems. By the Rev. E. A. Stafford, M.A., President of the Montreal Conference. It is beautifully printed on English paper, and bound in extra English cloth, bevelled edges, and lettered in gold..... 0 35

Religion of Life; or, Christ and Nicodemus. By John G. Manly. Cloth..... 0 50

"Of the orthodox evangelical type, vigorous and earnest. Most great theological questions come up for more or less of notice, and Mr. Manly's remarks are always thoughtful and penetrating."—*The British Quarterly Review.*

Roll Book. Designed for the Use of Infant Classes. One-quire Book containing lines for 178 Scholars, and lasting for 13 years, $1.00; and a Two-quire Book similar to above 1 50

Secretary's Minute Book. New design. By Thomas Wallis. Boards 0 60

Secretary's Minute Book 0 50

Sermons on Christian Life. By the Rev. C. W. Hawkins. Cloth 1 00

Spiritual Struggles of a Roman Catholic. An Autobiographical Sketch. By the Rev. Louis N. Beaudry. Steel Portrait. Cloth 1 00

"We do not remember having seen a volume better fitted than this for universal circulation among Protestants and Romanists."—*Talmage's Christian at Work.*

Sunday-School Class Book. Cloth, per dozen 0 75

Sunday-School Class Book. New design. Cloth, per doz . 1 50

Sunday-School Register 0 50

Sunday-School Record (new) for Secretaries 1 25

Theological Compend. By the Rev. Amos Binney. 32mo, cloth 0 30

The Guiding Angel. By Kate Murray. 18mo, cloth 0 30

Weekly Offering Book..... 1 50

Within the Vail; or, Entire Sanctification. By the Rev. James Caswell 0 10

☞ *Any Book mailed post-free on receipt of price.*

USEFUL BOOKS.

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, with Supplement. Bound in sheep $12 50

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, with Supplement and Denison's Index. Bound in sheep 13 50

Worcester's Unabridged Dictionary, with Supplement. Full sheep 11 00

Chambers's Encyclopædia. 10 vols., cloth 25 00
" " 10 vols., half morocco, extra.. 50 00

Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia. 3 vols., cloth 18 00
" " 3 vols., sheep 22 50
" " 3 vols., half morocco 27 00

Smith's Bible Dictionary. 4 vols., cloth 20 00
" " " 4 vols., sheep 25 00

Smith & Barnum's Bible Dictionary. 8vo, cloth 5 00

McClintock & Strong's Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Cyclopædia.
10 vols.. cloth 50 00
10 vols., sheep 60 00
10 vols., half morocco 80 00

Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia. 3 vols., cloth 12 60

Young's Great Concordance. Cloth 5 00
" " " Half Russia, net 5 75

Matthew Henry's Commentary. 3 vols., cloth, net 12 00
" " 9 vols., cloth, net 15 00

Adam Clarke's Commentary. Latest edition. Edited by Thornley Smith.
6 vols., cloth 20 00
6 vols., sheep 24 00
6 vols., half morocco 30 00

Adam Clarke's Commentary. Edited by Dr. Curry. Cloth, per vol. 3 00

&c., &c., &c., &c.

All the latest English and American editions of standard and other books kept in stock or got to order promptly. Sunday-school Library and Prize Books in great variety.

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, Montreal. S. F. HUESTIS, Halifax, N.S.

